ON PRAYERS TO THE DEAD

J. G. H. BARRY. D.D.

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BY
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DEDICATORY LETTER

TO

CHARLES C. MARSHALL, ESQ.

I

My dear Mr. Marshall: —

I hope you will not be disappointed in this book which you have so kindly permitted me to dedicate to you. I trust you have not been expecting an elaborate and learned treatise on the Invocation of Saints which you could show with pride as an illustration of the erudition of the clergy of the American Church. In the possible case that you have been expecting something other than I have to offer, it is perhaps as well that I should make clear my purpose in writing. I have had no intention of producing a work of original research; that would be as far beyond my reach as it is beyond my intention. I doubt if there is any more research of value to be done on the subject of Invocation. And in any case there is a sufficient number of learned treatises in existence to

supply the need of scholars, as the book list at the beginning of this volume will show. There are also brief tracts to supply a certain sort of popular demand. My ambition has been to produce a book which should present the essentials of my subject, and at the same time so present them as to attract, not the clergy, but the laity. Such a book, I conceive, should be clear, brief, and not cumbered with technicalities. My humble position is that of a popularizer, attempting to reach a public which is not much given to theological reading. We of the clergy are apt to blame the laity because they do not do as much theological reading as we think they ought, and then we do not take pains to provide them with books which they can read with ease and profit. Here is an attempt in one department of theology — whether success or failure time will show.

II

It has long been a growing conviction with me that one of our principal needs is a better understanding of the meaning of the Communion of Saints. We are, as Christians, hopelessly provincial, not to say suburban.

Our spiritual activities run the petty round of our individual concerns. *Prayer* means largely petition for one's self and for our immediate circle of interests; it does not mean spiritual interests in communion with the whole Body of Christ. I suppose that during the past eighteen months I have read between thirty and forty volumes on Prayer. With the aid of them I have been looking at Prayer from a Protestant and from an Anglican standpoint; and the greater part of what I have read has seemed quite unconscious that Prayer meant anything more than the prayer of petition! The books are concerned with Prayer as the asking for things, and with the attempts to solve the intellectual difficulties raised by rationalists against Prayer as the asking for things. One rises from the reading of such books with no consciousness of belonging to anything greater than a society of beggars, clamoring ceaselessly at the doors of heaven. The prayer of petition is, no doubt, an unspeakable privilege; but does it not lose much of its value if it be isolated from other experiences of the prayer life? Does it not tend to become inconceivable, as many to-day

find it to be inconceivable, if it be nothing more than a subordinate feature of our prayer life? In other words, petitions are harmonious and intelligible as experiences of the one family of God seeking to realize the greatest possible fullness of life as members of the Body in union with all its other members. But our feeling that we can and ought to *ask* springs from a sense of our union with our Lord in His spiritual Body — a sense of union which we have attained through some, whether understood or not, use of the higher forms of prayer. Fortunately many of us use prayer of meditation and union in some elementary way without being able to give them their technical name.

It is chiefly through these higher forms of Prayer that we gain our consciousness of the true meaning of the Communion of Saints. Our spirit pushes its activities out beyond the material frontiers of life and enters into communion with other spirits, members of the same Body, and with the Body's Head. These prayers meet and touch at the Body's center and the members of the Body, whether on earth or in the middle state, or in heaven, respond to the ap-

peals of one another upon their love and sympathy and prayers. The constant tragedy is that so many of us pass through this universe of spiritual activities, as the diver passes unwetted through the water, clad in insulating indifference and ignorance, holding out no hand for the help of our brethren and heedless of their silent appeal to our love. Oftentimes, no doubt, as we stand by graves, or go back in memory to our childhood, or come upon relics that we had laid away and long forgotten, there is the bitter ache of an unsatisfied affection, an affection which withers and dies for lack of expression. If only we had learned the joy of an affection which never misses of expression because it is, where all our life is, hid with Christ in God.

III

It is strange that under the imperfect religious system in which you and I were brought up, we should have been taught so much more of the activities of the powers of evil than those of the powers of good. The typical ill-instructed child who is to make up the membership of our Church of the future

will be found on questioning to have some elementary notion of the spiritual powers of evil which are active in this universe. To him the devil and his angels are realities. If he does not abandon his religion as he grows up this conviction will remain. To him " The devil as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour." He has some sort of conception of " The world rulers of this darkness " against whom his battle lies. But when his life faces the other way, it looks out upon a universe which is for him empty — he looks across vast vacant spaces till his thought touches a far off heaven where God is enthroned, God between Whom and his soul there is nothing. To him, the Saints are characters in Church history, who are pictured in stained glass windows, wearing queer clothes and standing in strange attitudes; who carry about with them the instruments of their death, reminding him of how uncomfortable the world once was for Christians. If he has any thankfulness stirred in him by the pictures of the Saints it is, no doubt, that the world has now become as comfortable for him as for other men. For him the Dead are very

dead and he does not care to speak of them as the thought of them makes him vaguely uneasy. That he, living as comfortably as he can in this world, has, or conceivably can have, any relation with the Saints or with his own personal dead never enters the wildest fancies of his dreams.

But if principalities and powers of darkness beset us, so do angels and saints defend us. We are come unto them, unto the angels in their innumerable multitude and to the constantly increasing number of the spirits of just men made perfect; and we need, for the vitality of our own spiritual experience, for the richness and fullness of the life of the Church here on earth, to realize the possibility of our spiritual contacts. There is barrenness in the life which has not its frontiers of experience coterminous with the frontiers of the whole Church. The richness of the life of the Church is dependent upon its entering into its entire inheritance.

IV

For consider how more than once the Church has lost tremendously through its

failure to present to men the whole content of the Christian revelation. The beliefs and practices of Christianity are not a set of arbitrary enactments which conceivably might have been something quite different — the belief in and use of which have no significance except as we show through our acceptance of them the submission of our will to God. The revealed things are for the direction and development of our spiritual lives on their way to the vision of God. They *are* because humanity *needs* them; and when any part of the Church forgets any portion of its divine trust disaster follows.

One of the observable results of this disaster is that man who *needed* the thing God provided, being deprived of that thing and conscious of his need, seeks to supply it as best he may. Consider this great fact in one or two instances. The Western Church has allowed the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick to be perverted or to fall into disuse. Rome reduces it to a sacrament of the dying and practically denies its healing power. The Anglican Church, after providing a Service for the Unction of the Sick in the First Prayer Book of Edward VI, dropped

it in all succeeding books, and the Churches which have sprung from the Church of England long followed her example. We in the American Church debate the restoration of Unction in successive General Conventions where an ill-informed laity determine the fate of the Sacraments. In the meantime, some few of our Bishops, exercising their rightful prerogatives, bless the Oil of Unction, and some few of the clergy, feeling the needs of their parishioners of more importance than questions of regularity, procure this blessed oil and anoint the sick — they can tell you with what results. But in the meantime, masses of Christian people feel uneasily, as they read their New Testaments, that something is wrong; that there ought to be available for them means for the healing of physical ills ministered by the trustees of their religion. They are not looking for miracles to be performed but for a spiritual power to be exercised — a power that will meet and answer their faith, and, if it is the good will of God, will relieve them from their bodily pain. When the Church fails them it is not a matter of great wonder that they are prepared material for the formation

of sects of various kinds which have for their chief ends ministry to the physical ills of men. Such fallings away from the Church then engender attempts within the Church at a like ministry to physical needs, but without recourse to the spiritual means that the Catholic religion provides in the Sacrament of Unction. The loss to the Church through the abandonment of its appointed means of healing is very great.

Take another and more disastrous instance. The Church is the Body of Christ and its members are members one of another. The Church, understanding this from the first, entered upon its career with a distinct comprehension of its social mission. The Church in any place was a band of brethren, responsible for one another and understanding that if one member suffered the other members necessarily suffered with him. This sense of coöperation and responsibility in great measure passed away. It was not the size of the Church which made brotherhood in any active sense impossible, but the growing worldliness of the Church. The social action of the Church in keeping society clean and honest fell to a low level.

Members of the Church have constantly been conspicuous in the crass individualism which looks on its own things and not on the things of the brother. Scramble for individual aggrandizement and self-gratification rather than sense of responsibility for the brother has characterized the membership of the Church (I am speaking very generally), and the Church as an organization has not energetically acted socially. What has been the result? That the conception of brotherhood constantly has been driven to organize itself outside the Church. All through the Middle Ages social groups organized themselves in separation from and in opposition to the Church. To-day we see the great masses of the world's workers alienated from the Church, seeking to realize for themselves what they ought to have found in the Christian Body. The consequent social danger is great. The spiritual disaster is greater.

These are but two illustrations of the general principle that when the Church is unfaithful to its mission in any respect there will be attempts outside the Church (clumsy and imperfect attempts, no doubt) to supply

that which the Church fails to supply. This is strikingly so in the consequences which have followed the Church's failure to understand the Communion of Saints.

The growth of Spiritualism, to use a clumsy word, in all its forms, is one of the most marked phenomena of the day. As was to have been expected it has received an enormous impulse from the great war. It has been vastly fortified and rendered respectable by the adhesion of men whose names carry weight in the scientific world. The possibility of some sort of communication with the spirits of the departed is claimed by men on whose reputation no shade of suspicion of trickery or low motives can possibly be cast to be an established fact. Whether this be so or no, I do not see how any one who is familiar with the writings and experiences of the Saints, with all their accounts of supernatural communication narrated almost as commonplaces of their spiritual life, can be very skeptical about it. What I am concerned with is the underlying causes which send, not so much scientists to investigate, as plain people to seek, the means of communication with the departed. To

so complex a set of phenomena there is, to be sure, no single cause to be assigned; but there seems to me no doubt at all that one influential cause is to be found in the failure of large parts of the Christian world to offer any intelligible account of the world beyond; in its treatment of death as a final settlement of the soul's affairs, through its designation to a final and unalterable state of reward or punishment. Protestantism brusquely swept aside the age-long convictions of the Christian Church with impatient talk about superstition and heathenism; then it buried its dead with the assertion that their souls were now in heaven or hell according as their deserts might be. Their state was fixed and unalterable; there was nothing that could be done for them nor that they could do for us. We might not so much as follow them in our prayers. We might possibly think of the Saints as praying for us, but it was without any comprehension of our individual needs. It not only denied, as was right, any future probation, but to all intents and purposes it left no place for future growth. It was compelled to think of the vast majority of humanity as lost. It was compelled to

think that in the case of those saved who were yet imperfect some sort of spiritual miracle was operated in the article of death whereby they were fitted for the immediate enjoyment of the beatific vision.

This was not the doctrine of the formal documents of the Anglican Church; but it soon after the Reformation became the prevailing belief of its membership, including the greater part of the clergy. It is to-day in process of being displaced by a revised belief in a Middle State of purification and growth which we who are still in our pilgrimage can reach by our prayers and sacrifices. Protestantism, at length finding its own doctrines incredible, has turned its face to the still less credible doctrine of universalism; but still, so far as it is concerned, there are no recognized means of approach to the world beyond.

In the meantime the harm has been done; and souls hungry for some expression of their love for their dead turn in multitudes to any offered channel of communication, however unlikely. They not only seek along the sane ways of scientific investigation but, finding these slow in advance and tentative in

their conclusions, rush to any impostor who offers for a moderate fee to put them in communication with their dead. I think this is the quite natural result of a wholly intelligible disappointment at the failure of the religion in which they have been brought up to give any credible account of the world beyond or to provide any way of approach to it.

Among those educated in the Catholic faith there will be those who have failed to make a success in its application to life and who will be drawn away to practices in the way of communication with the dead which are more thrilling and sensational than those which the Church has to offer. But, broadly speaking, the Catholic Christian does not feel the need of any form of Spiritualism because his religion gives him that which will satisfy his love. In the practice of Prayers for the Dead and of Prayers to the Dead he gains peace and experiences communion with other members of the Body of Christ. This is infinitely more than the work of the Medium at the best estimate of it has to offer. One would not care to accept a few broken phrases —" I am happy," " All is well,"—

in exchange for the sense of dear presences that we find at the altar, the privilege of bringing names precious to us to the Heart of Jesus.

V

In pressing our rights to the enjoyment of all the privileges of the Communion of Saints, it was to be expected that there should be roused to activity all the forces of unbelief and half-belief. In particular we could be sure that the usual cry of Anglican obscurantism would be set up — the cry of *danger*. One gets rather bored by the constant treatment of religion as being a *dangerous affair*. If we were to read over all the addresses of Anglican bishops for the last century (which God forbid) we should probably find two words of great frequency of occurrence — danger and crisis. We are constantly passing through dangerous crises. To the typical Anglican mind, I gather, the most dangerous of all practices is that of saying one's prayers — we must not pray for the dead, we must not pray to the Saints, we must not pray to our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament, else dire results may follow!

Now it was not a Christian that bade us "live dangerously"; but it is a very Christian piece of advice. It is much more Christian than the Episcopal view of life that we should live smugly and avoid all spiritual risks. I do not myself see that the members of the Churches of the Anglican communion are endangering their souls' salvation by saying too many prayers — by saying the wrong sort of prayers. I think their true danger is the danger of prayerlessness. After all, what *is* the danger of asking for the prayers of Blessed Mary, or of asking one's father or mother to continue in the state where they are to bear one's name before God? There is danger of forgetting our Lord's mediatorial office, we are told. But is there? How does it any more conflict with our Lord's mediatorial office to ask St. Mary to pray for me, now that she is in heaven, than it would if she were here on earth and I proffered the same request? The Invocation of the Dead is nothing more than the application of the principles of intercessory prayer to the whole Church, in heaven and in the middle state as well as on earth. If we think it profitable to ask other

people to pray for us, why should we draw a line at the place where, one would think, they would be able to pray the most effectually?

But what certainty have we that the Saints hear us? I should answer that we have the guarantee of the constant belief and practice of the Catholic Church throughout the ages. That is the guarantee I have for most of the things I believe. I have no demonstration of even the existence of God except the demonstration of faith. It is quite contrary to the religion that I hold to wait for demonstration before I believe: rather, I believe to get the demonstration — and when I get it, it is not the demonstration of the intellect but the demonstration of experience. The experience of the Catholic Church is a sufficient ground for my adoption of the practice of Invocation. *How* Saints know I do not expect to be told and I confess to not being very much interested.

Naturally, theologians have speculated on this subject from the time of the Fathers on; but they were speculating on the basis of an existing practice. While the theologians speculated, the Church prayed. "The plain

fact is that people did as they were accustomed to do without concerning themselves with any intellectual justification, and the Church accepted it, and left the theologians to justify it at their leisure. The view ultimately accepted was what we may call the theory of a divine *camera obscura*. The Saints see in the mirror of the Divine Word which they contemplate, all that it concerns them to know, and aid us through their prayers and through their prayers alone." [1]

This is a quite possible explanation. Today, it may be, we should be inclined to think along other lines. We are coming to see how largely mind is independent upon bodily limitations, how mind can reach and influence mind outside our usual modes of communication. The thought appears to find its object at an indefinite distance. Perhaps it is along the lines of an activity of the spirit transcending material limitations that we shall think to the solution of our problem. Let those speculate who care to: in the meantime the experience of the Church knows.

We have heard at every stage of the Catholic revival in the Anglican communion

[1] Goudge, p. 24.

the cry that there was being brought back to the Church, purified by the Reformation, all the Mediæval superstitions from which it had so happily escaped. This assertion is made with special violence when it is a question of the recovery of some intelligible use of the Communion of Saints. I fancy, my dear Mr. Marshall, that you and I are not much distressed by fear of the inroads of "Mediæval superstitions"— there are so many worse things to worry about! Indeed, superstition for superstition, I am inclined to prefer those of the Middle ages to those of the modern mind. I myself should prefer the superstitions of Paganism to the latter. Paganism was at least a religion, with some notion of God and of the worship of God, and not a merely speculative system whose supreme deity is limited by the human intellect. I had rather be a Pagan suckled in a creed outworn than the type of Christian student who asserts that we cannot believe miracles which are contrary to the order of nature — the order of nature necessarily meaning the conclusions of the human mind about nature, up to date, which are actually imposed as the limits of conceivable

Divine action. I had rather be a Mediæval peasant, kissing the feet of a winking Madonna, than a rationalistic bishop announcing his disbelief in the Virgin Birth and the bodily resurrection of the Lord Who died for him. This world is filled with superstitions, and the simple superstitions of the ignorant to me, at least, are much to be preferred to the superstitions of culture.

But in reality there is small ground for fearing the inroads of Mediæval superstitions. We shall be quite able to practice the cultus of the Saints without in any way confusing that cultus with the worship of Almighty GOD. Is it a fact of observation that the worship of God has been obscured in those parts of Christendom where the cultus of the Saints prevails? Avoiding irritating allusions to the state of religion in countries where the Churches of the Papal obedience hold sway,— has anything that we have ever read about the Church in Russia, for example, suggested a loss of the meaning of Divine worship or a forgetfulness of the majesty of Almighty GOD or of the infinite love and pity of our Redeemer? Might it not, perhaps, be not unreasonably suggested

that forgetfulness of the obligations of Divine worship is rather observable in those parts of Christendom where the sacrifice of the Mass is denied, where the Holy Communion is offered to God's children at rare intervals, where churches are closed and locked save for a few hours once a week, and where the chief reason for Christian people coming together is to hear an address which oftentimes has nothing to do with the faith of Christ? "I go to St. James' Church," a business man was heard to say; "I like Mr. ——'s sermons. He is not all the time bothering you about religion." We hear it constantly asserted in that part of the world where we live that the members of the Church are impatient of dogmatic teaching. I am not sure but that an inoculation with the virus of Mediævalism would be an advantageous method of treatment for many parishes of the Anglican communion.

VI

The attitude toward the Saints which appears to me to be the true attitude of Catholic Christians, appears to others to "belong to a luxuriant and highly imaginative religion

rather than to a religion of sobriety and restraint which . . . is the mark of the English Church to-day." [2] I am quite free to confess that a "luxuriant and highly imaginative religion" appeals to me much more than a religion of "sobriety and restraint." The high-water mark of the latter was, I should suppose, reached in the 18th century in England. The English Church, on the one hand, treated with contempt as a mere department of the State, and on the other, brow-beaten by the pseudo-intellectualism of the Deistic writers, nearly perished. The leaders of the Church before all things else abhorred "enthusiasm": and the Church was rescued from a dishonored death only by the efforts of enthusiasts who threw sobriety and restraint to the winds. It was the Methodists and the Evangelicals who saved the day by bringing about a spiritual awakening. So far as the Churches of the Anglican communion have got back to ideals of "sobriety and restraint" as the highest they can think of in the way of spiritual expression they will be the better for an inroad of "luxuriant and highly imaginative" Mediævalism.

[2] Stewart, *Doctrina Romanensium*, etc., p. 87.

VII

The Anglican sobriety easily lends itself to a spirit of compromise. It seeks, not for ideal expression, but for working adjustments. When disagreements arise in the Church men of this temperament do not give themselves to the patient investigation of truth, feeling that it is all important that they should know the truth and be made free by it; but they eagerly set about what they regard as the *practical* treatment of the situation — the building of a platform so cleverly fitted together that all parties can stand on it and each assert that it means what he means.

In this matter of the cultus of the Saints such a platform has been sought in what is called *comprecation*. It is admitted on all sides that the Saints in heaven (we must except, of course, those who do not believe that there are any Saints as yet in heaven) pray for us. The early Christian writers did not employ a single mode of address when they desired to profit by the prayers of the Saints. Sometimes they said simply, "Pray for me." Sometimes they asked God that He would hear the prayers of the Saints

on their behalf. This latter — this asking that God will accept the prayers of the Saints for us — is called comprecation. The early writers seem not to have made much of the distinction. In view of the inscriptions in the Catacombs I do not believe that it can be successfully maintained that comprecation is the earlier practice which later, by abuse, passed into invocation or prayer addressed directly to the Saint rather than to God. The early writers seem to me, on the whole, quite indifferent to such a distinction. They asked the Saint for his prayers, or they asked God to hear the prayers of the Saint, as seemed to them good at the time. Comprecation, one would imagine, would be a formal or liturgical prayer rather than the type of more informal and private devotion. But some modern writers have seized upon the distinction as affording a splendid basis for compromise. As the Saints undoubtedly pray for us, why not agree to ask God to hear their prayers, and also agree to abstain from any direct address to the Saints? So shall we avoid all danger of superstition.

But there are always those who decline to

ascend the platform of compromise, however cleverly constructed. The late Bishop John Wordsworth was one of these. Speaking for others besides himself he says: "They have regretted it (comprecation) because they knew that this was the first step historically, and likely again to be the first step, toward the practice of direct invocation. They have felt that such an indirect method of obtaining the prayers of individual intercessors was most unlikely to satisfy for any length of time, those who desired such help. They felt also that it was an unreasonable thing in itself to ask our heavenly Father to move some one else to move Him to do what we desired."

We may not agree with Bp. Wordsworth as to the objectionability of comprecation; but I think we shall agree with him that when any one who has gotten so far in spiritual experience as really to value the prayers of the Saints is not at all likely to stop at the line that compromisers would draw. Comprecation is, as I said, a formal and liturgical mode of address, and lacks the warmth and glow which love inspires. If

our devotion is kindled by love, whether love of God in Himself, or of God as manifested in His Saints, it will seek direct personal expression: the utterances of love are apt to pass beyond sobriety and restraint and run to imaginative and luxuriant modes of address. Unless the Saints are very real persons to us, we shall not want to speak to them at all. Unless our own faithful departed are conceived as truly living in Christ with a love that yearns backward to us, we shall prefer to forget them. We may be silent or we may speak; the one thing we are not likely to do is to be careful to be sober and restrained.

This is a very long letter, my dear Mr. Marshall, but it seems to me that the time has come for some one to speak out in these matters. If it turns out that the speaking meets no sympathetic answer, one will not be overmuch surprised. But I am convinced that many in the Church are thinking about these high matters and are wanting to know what others think; and especially are wanting some guide to the thought of the Church. I have done my best to be *a* guide;

but perhaps my *best* will have been the pointing to the existence of other and more competent guides than myself.

VIII

These matters must be discussed, as all Christian teaching must be discussed, as a preliminary to the coming attempts at Church Unity. You and I are, as I suppose all thinking Churchmen must be, tremendously interested in the subject of Unity. We are convinced, I think, that any attempts to attain Unity which are conditioned upon silence as to our deepest convictions, which are advanced by the facile process of shuffling out of sight the vital matters on which we differ from one another, and the production of a compromise platform, are futile. There can be no Church Unity with those who neither understand what the Church is nor what Unity is; who are anxious to achieve some sort of union only because of the intolerable pressure of the problems created by the divisions of Christendom. A unity so founded would certainly fail of any wide acceptance or long continuance. Unity that is more than compromise must be

founded in obedience to the Catholic Faith as received and transmitted by the Catholic Episcopate. The unity that we must aim at is the unity that Christ prayed for: His prayer was not simply, as it is usually quoted by the advocates of Church union, that His followers might be *one,* leaving them apparently to decide what *one* means; but that "they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Such union is not accomplished by agreement and compromise, it is the corporate union of those who are in Christ, and therefore in one another, and who find the highest realization of this union in the Communion of Saints.

I trust, my dear Mr. Marshall, I shall have your sympathetic interest and I beg you to believe me

Ever sincerely yours in our blessed Lord,

J. G. H. Barry.

PRAYERS TO THE DEAD

I

When we turn over the pages of the New Testament with a view to ascertaining the meaning the word *Church* conveyed to its writers and their readers, we have no difficulty in concluding that the word bears a double meaning, and that what meaning is to be attributed to it in a given case must be determined by the context. In the first place, the word Church is used to designate those congregations of Christians which, during the century in which the New Testament was being written, were rapidly growing in number as the result of the Apostolic preaching. These little groups of converts, wherever they may be, each with sufficient organization to enable it to administer the sacraments and to direct and minister to the spiritual life of its members, are known as a church, though it is obvious from the way in which they are spoken of that they have

some sort of relation to and dependence upon one another. Having in mind simply those passages of Holy Scripture in which churches are spoken of as communities of Christians in this or that place, no attentive reader would infer from this that each church was a self-sufficient entity, entitled to go its own way and manage its own affairs, and capable of perpetuating itself without reference to any other community.

But the emphasis in those passages which are geographically descriptive is on external position and not on essential nature. We read, for instance, that after the persecution in which Saul of Tarsus was the chief actor had died down in consequence of his conversion, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." [1] Later, when St. Paul separated from St. Barnabas and, with St. Silas, started on a new missionary journey, "He went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." [2]

[1] Acts 9:31.
[2] Acts 15:41.

The local Christian community is usually addressed as the Church in such and such a place: "The Church of God which is at Corinth." [3] This community is sometimes designated from its meeting place: "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." [4] Even when St. Paul is speaking of the churches from the point of view of his over-sight of them, he still speaks of them in the plural. In summing up his labors he says: "Besides those things which are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." [5]

When, however, the church is viewed with reference, not to its extension but to its essential nature, the terms of its description change. We no longer think of Christians assembled in one place, or as having external relations to one another, but we think of Christians as having acquired a certain character through the very act whereby they were made Christians. What is made

[3] I Cor. 1:2.
[4] I Cor. 16:19.
[5] II Cor. 11:28.

prominent in the Christian life is its *newness*. The Christian is not one who has accepted a new system of belief or a new code of morality or who is united with others to form a new society. The new Christian is one who has passed through a supernatural experience; he has been "born again," regenerated; he is the outcome of a special creative act of God. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." [6] He is this because through the creative action of God the Holy Ghost a new relation to God in Christ has been achieved. The Incarnate Nature of our blessed Lord has been extended to him and through participation in that he has also acquired a new relation to God the Blessed Trinity. "According to his divine power he hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." [7] St. Paul's phrase for expressing the fact of our union with God

[6] II Cor. 5: 17.
[7] II St. Peter 1: 3-4.

in Christ is that we are "in Christ." As the meaning of this phrase is central to any understanding of the essential nature of the spiritual life, it would be well to make one's self thoroughly familiar with all the passages of St. Paul's writings that embody this conception. But for our present purpose it is enough to illustrate the point with one or two citations. We have already referred to the statement that, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." [8] We may add the teaching that all spiritual blessings are the result of being in Christ; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." [9] Christians are commonly addressed as those who are in Christ. So St. Paul writing to the Colossians: "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse." [10] The union of the Christian with Christ is so central a fact that the reality of his life is where Christ is; this world is really of small importance, he is already dead to that:

[8] II Cor. 5:17.
[9] Eph. 1:3.
[10] Col. 1:1.

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." [11] Sometimes the method of expressing this spiritual fact is reversed, as when St. Paul interprets the "Mystery" of the Incarnation he says: "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory." [12]

This thought of the Christian in Christ and Christ in the Christian leads up to the conception of the totality which results from the incorporation of all Christians in Christ. The New Testament word for describing this totality is *body* — Christ and those who are in Him constitute One Body. The nature of the Body is stressed because it needed and needs to be made plain that the Church is not a society, nor an organization, the result of the agreement in belief and practice of certain individuals who associate themselves the more effectively to propagate their beliefs and practices. There is nothing in the New Testament even to suggest that the Church springs out of a common agreement

[11] Col. 3:3.
[12] Col. 1:27.

or the desire of those who cherish certain ideals to make their action more efficient. The conception of the Body is chosen to express the fact of the inner nature of the Christian Church rather than as descriptive of an institution, because the notion embodied emphasizes the organic character of the fact to be described. An institution, a society, grows through association; and a body grows through the extending life of its original germ; it is built up by virtue of the central life communicating itself, and what is added to the body is truly made living by contact with the central life.

When, then, we try to understand the nature of the Church as a totality in contrast with the notion of churches as scattered communities of Christians, we are met by this notion of the Church as an organic whole: the assumption of humanity to the divine Person of the Son of God in the Incarnation. Incarnate God *is* the manifestation of God on earth, the kingdom of God, the Church. The kingdom of God, the Church, grows with the expansion of the Incarnate Body through the regeneration of human souls, through the extension to them

of the Incarnate Life by participation in which they likewise become partakers of the divine nature. The actual upbuilding of the Church, the edification of the Body of Christ, is an organic growth, the development of a living body. This is the point of view from which the Church as a whole, in contrast with the scattered congregations which are its external manifestation, is presented in the New Testament.

Christ the Head, we the members — Christ first, we made one with Him by the impartation to us of His life — that is the New Testament conception of the Body. Such a Body is, of necessity *one;* it is impossible to conceive it otherwise. This unity is the essential unity of a shared life, not the federated unity of a voluntary agreement. " He is the head of the body, the church." [13] God " hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." [14] In this Body of which all the baptized are members, the purposes of the central life are fulfilled through

[13] Col. 1 : 18.
[14] Eph. 1 : 23.

a diversity of operation in the members. There is distinction of function within the unity of this spiritual body which is the Church as there is in the natural body of man. There is no need to follow out in detail the wonderful exposition of this theme in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. St. Paul's summing up will be sufficient for our purpose: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof." [15] The intimacy of this personal union with Christ is further emphasized in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." [16]

It is to the growth of the body that St. Paul looks for that final conquest of the world by the kingdom of God, when at length all shall have been gathered into the unity of Christ and all differences shall in consequence pass away. All men who are saved will ultimately become members of the Body, and whatever was ideal when he wrote

[15] I Cor. 12: 12 and 27.
[16] Eph. 5: 30.

will become actual. It is to this end that gifts have been bestowed upon the body by the operation of the Holy Spirit within it. They have been given "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building of the body of Christ: till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a complete man, unto the measure of the stature of the completion of Christ." [17] St. Paul has already expressed this conception a little earlier in the epistle where he describes the Church as the "Completeness of him who all in all is being completed." [18]

It is through the progress of this unity that all diversities will ultimately be banished. Not that diversity of function within the body which is the manifold manifestation and application of the One Life, but that diversity between men which has within it the seeds of hostility. In the "Completeness" when all things shall have become obedient to Christ, and presently, so far as obedience to Christ is found, the diversity which is hostility is done away.

[17] Eph. 4: 12 and 13.
[18] Eph. 1: 23.

"In the fellowship of the Church, or, as St. Paul would prefer to put it, in Jesus Christ, the deepest of all divisions based on religious faith becomes negligible; there is neither Jew nor Gentile; the deepest of all divisions based on culture and civilization becomes negligible; there is neither Greek nor Scythian: the deepest of all social divisions become negligible; there is neither bond nor free, servant nor master; even that division of sex on which the whole social fabric rests becomes negligible, there is neither male nor female; but what? One man in Christ Jesus — the whole human race governed by one purpose, and that the purpose of Christ." [19] The same truth is reiterated in the Epistle to the Colossians: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." [20]

This Apostolic conception of the Incarnate

[19] Temple, *Issues of Faith,* pp. 16 and 17: Gal. 3:28.

[20] Col. 3:10 and 11.

Life as progressively subjecting all things to, and incorporating all things in itself, is the conception of a rebellious world brought back to submission to the Divine will. It is the conception of hostile diversity converted to diversified unity. It is not man alone but the whole creation which will experience this unifying process. Man who is immediately redeemed by Christ stands first; but in consequence of his return to God in Christ the creation will follow: "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." [21] It is obvious that the relation of the individual man to this process which includes the universe in its scope, and also to that special part of the process which is the Church Militant here on earth, is a strictly subordinate and dependent relation. The one thing that would seem to be absolutely excluded in any the most elementary

[21] Rom. 8: 19–21.

view of the action of the Church would be individualism. There is room in the Body of Christ for endless diversity of function, for the development to the very uttermost of our special endowments. One of the wonders of the development of Christian character under the discipline of the Church has been its striking diversity of detail in association with a perfect unity of purpose. But there can be no place in the Church for the morbid egoism which is bent before all things on the assertion of self and the realization of certain assumed rights. There can be in the Body no independent action; all action has relation to the actions of others and to the purposes of the Body as a whole. The religious individualist who will have nothing between his soul and God is attempting the impossible task of being a universe by himself. He in fact isolates himself much more from his brother man than the much-despised hermit who still considers himself a member of the Church of God with all the obligations of such membership. He at least is attempting to realize the Communion of Saints which the individualist, in practice, denies. "In true religion un-

limited individualism is an impossibility. The individual can only attain to his highest in the life of the community alike here and hereafter." [22]

II

This biblical teaching of the union of all Christians in Christ and, through their union in Christ, with one another, was in due time formulated and inserted in the Creed as the article, "I believe in the Communion of Saints." It is almost the latest article of the Faith to gain entrance to the Creed. The clause appears in a creed which was circulated under the name of St. Jerome, which ends with the words: "I believe in the remission of sins, in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Resurrection of the Flesh unto Life everlasting." Early in the fifth century, before the death of Jerome, the clause is found in a commentary on the Creed by Niceta, Bishop of Remesiana. From the East it traveled gradually westward until it had obtained universal recognition in the Church.[23]

[22] Charles, p. 80.

[23] Sweete, *The Holy Catholic Church*, pp. 157 ff.

ON PRAYERS TO THE DEAD

It was during the centuries which preceded and immediately followed the adoption of the Communion of Saints as an article of the Faith that the Church was chiefly engaged in that process of theological formulation which resulted in the dogmatic decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. I think we best understand this process when we see in it the mind of the Church engaged in *thinking out* the meaning of the revelation committed to it. The nature of that revelation, as conveying to man so much as he can know of the meaning of God and of God's will for him, of the mode of God's appeal to him in the Incarnation and all that follows from it, is so stupendous as to make it impossible that it should be at once grasped in its entirety. Our Lord had warned His followers against any assumption that all that was needed was to know "the simple words of Christ." He made plain to them the need of guidance to the understanding of His teaching and to the fact that the Holy Spirit, Whom He was to send as His Vicar to abide with men forever, would take up the work of unfolding the meaning of His revelation and lead them into all the truth: "When he, the Spirit of

truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come." [24] The result of this guiding action of the Holy Spirit is seen in the slowly growing apprehension of the meaning and implications of our Lord's teaching by the mind of the Church. We can see this process in the struggle between that conception of the Church which would have made it a sect of modified Judeaism, Judeaism plus a Messiah Judeaistically conceived, and the conception championed by St. Paul of a Church embracing humanity because of the universal nature of the humanity assumed by our Lord. You can see it in the early heresies concerning the Person of our Lord which were essentially failures to grasp the notion of God incarnate, failure to think deep enough into the facts of the Gospel. We feel that even to-day there is much failure to think out the meaning of the Christian revelation. The Church has never succeeded in at all adequately presenting the kingdom of God as a transforming social force: the possible relations of the

[24] St. John 16: 13.

Church to the social order are still unrealized, with the result of a growing antagonism between the aims of the Church and the aims of secular society. We all know the difficulty that we have in grasping the teachings of the Christian religion in other than a fragmentary way, in attaining anything that we can consider as at all a well rounded spiritual development. It is, therefore, easy to grasp the fact that the apprehension of the Gospel by the first generations of the Church must have been a growing apprehension and the formulation of its conclusions gradual. What the first centuries of the Christian era presented to us is the spectacle of the Church thinking — thinking its way into the meaning of its spiritual trust, thinking what each item of it meant in itself and in relation to all the other items, and how best these truths committed to it could be brought to bear on human lives so as to stimulate them to response to the demands of God upon them.

So rich are the meanings which are packed into this clause of the Creed — I believe in the Communion of Saints — that it is small wonder that the Church was slow in actually

appropriating them. To be knit into one body with Christ and all our brethren, to be partakers of a common life and co-workers in a common action, and that action the bringing of all men to the obedience of God in Christ, is so tremendous a thing and so complex, that the reactions on life must be manifold. How could this communion, this fellowship, even begin to be realized? How am I to act upon it? We get a very early expression of it in the opening of the Acts of the Apostles: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers — continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread at home, did eat their meat with gladness." [25] Here are various modes of exercising the common life. I think we shall not be wrong in assuming that they would have found their earliest experience of their union with our Lord and with one another in their daily Eucharist. This is the sacrament of union — of union with our Lord and of one another in Him. The congregations of the early

[25] Acts 2: 42 and 46.

Church as they met for the celebration of the Supper must have felt this acutely because by the very terms of their Christian living they were a people apart. This separateness would increase as time went on and the exercise of their religion raised up against them the hostility of the state whether Jewish or Roman. Modern Christians have so universally abandoned the strictness of the Christian life and so lapsed to a life of compromise and conformity to the world, that they have lost almost entirely the sense of communion with one another, the sense of a common membership in Christ; and therefore they have lost one of the readiest keys to open the mystery of worship. For Christian worship is essentially the act of a *community*. The sacrament that we partake together is a *communion,* the sharing in common of the thing partaken, the humanity of Christ. Through our partaking of Him we are brought together. "For we being many are one loaf, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one loaf." [26]

[26] I Cor. 10: 17.

III

Here we are in the very heart of the meaning of our clause because here heaven and earth meet. The worship of the Eucharist is the worship of the *whole* Church; it is not merely an affair of the Church Militant. The worship that we offer is identical with the worship of heaven. In this sacrifice of the earthly and the heavenly altars the Priest and the Victim are the same. We lift up our hearts above this world unto the Lord and join in the united worship of earth and heaven where not only redeemed humanity, but angels and archangels and all the company of heaven are partakers. Intelligent participation in the Eucharistic worship of the Church takes us a long way toward the comprehension of the Communion of Saints. And because the Eucharistic worship of the Church has been so thrown into the background in the Churches of the Anglican Rite, one road to the realization of the meaning of the Communion of Saints has been blocked. The average parish of to-day offers to its members an early communion

once a week. It is inevitable that those who attend should come with the thought prominent, although unanalyzed, of seeking a gift for themselves in an act of individual communion. It is difficult to see how it can be otherwise when in a parish of, say, one hundred and fifty communicants, some dozen or fifteen will represent the average attendance at an early Mass. In the few parishes where the late service is indeed the Lord's service it has been found desirable to discourage late communions because of the lack of observance of the Church rule of fasting. But certainly we must recognize that the function of the Eucharist to interpret and actualize the Communion of Saints is obscured under present conditions and will so remain until something like corporate communions become a part of our parochial life. We have such at Christmas and Easter — at least in the present habit of parochial communions at Christmas and Easter we have the opportunity of emphasizing the corporate nature of the act. It would probably not be difficult to increase the number of such parochial communions; indeed, this is often done by adding to Christmas and Easter,

Whit-Sunday and All Saints, and, perhaps, a dedication or patronal festival. A community which has caught the meaning of communion as communion not only with our Lord but with one another, will have no difficulty in carrying the same intention into acts of communion which are only representative of the whole body — as indeed all communions must be in degree.

I do not at all mean in what I have said above to imply that I think late Masses without communions from the congregation are unjustifiable or imperfect. It is no doubt of somewhat late development in the history of the Church, but I cannot assent to that interpretation of things ecclesiastical which makes *late* a synonym of *wrong* or *impermissible*. The Church did not think about the revelation committed to it for a certain number of years and then say, "I have thought it all out and henceforth have need to think no more." There are obvious objections to a Church which does not think, and which does not produce things new as well as old out of its treasure. And in fact the Church was not long in seeing that in the complex act of the Eucharist, communion and wor-

ship are separable elements in the spiritual experience of the individual member of the Body; and that the fact that a Christian is not prepared on a certain occasion to make his communion does not exclude him from the corporate worship of the congregation. The offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice is the act of the whole Body of Christ in a given place, and within that Eucharistic act there is the distribution of the sacred Body and Blood to such as are prepared to receive them. But if an individual is not so prepared he is surely not cut off from the worshiping Body — not to be prepared to receive the communion at any given time is not the equivalent of excommunication. The central act of worship of the Christian congregation is offered without reference to the preparation of this or that individual person to make his communion. What the Mass without communions implies is that either the members of the congregation have made their communions at some other Mass but now wish to join in the offering of the sacrifice as an act of worship — the great corporate act of the parish for the day — or that they are at that time for some reason

unprepared to make their communion. There is, of course, the danger, I think at present rather remote, of the habitual substitution of participation in sacrificial worship for the reception of the sacrifice. The perception of a danger means that we are on our guard against it. At present I think it will be found that communions are more frequent in parishes where the late Mass without communions is celebrated than in others.

IV

The realization of our union with our Lord and with one another in the Holy Eucharist is only one form of this spiritual experience of the Communion of Saints: there are many others, for from the very nature of this communion it must lie back of and interpenetrate all Christian action. "None of us liveth to himself." "We are members one of another." By participation in the sacrifice of our Lord we have reached the highest form of prayer but we have not exhausted the modes of prayer. Wherever there is prayer that has reference to others,

whether those others are its objects or whether they are those who coöperate in our asking, the Communion of Saints is energetic. Prayer, indeed, is one of the most fruitful ways of fulfilling the obligations to others which grow out of our union with them. Prayer annihilates time and space; it enables us to throw the help of our intercession to those whom we have never seen and from whom half the world separates us. The ceaseless intercession that goes up about the altars of the earthly Church and from the hidden places of solitary intercessors is the means — one of the greatest — of the release of the spiritual energy of the Incarnation. It is not only the worshipers at the Sunday service, perhaps not chiefly those, whom we think of when we think of the energy of prayer which is being constantly brought to bear upon the world. We think of the religious houses where is the constant presentation of the Divine Office; we think of the multitudes kneeling daily before the Tabernacles of Christendom; we think of the silent forms we see in churches, of those who have paused in their work to seek some quiet place where they may lay their heart

before God, of those whose lips are moving and whose hearts are burning as in the midst of the distracting business of this world they lift up their spirits to God on behalf of their brethren. The tides of prayer flow constantly from earth to heaven; the answers to prayer flow back to earth. How much we know of that; and how little of the whole fact is the *much* we know! We know of missions carried on, of institutions supported, of souls and bodies healed, of the constant performance of spiritual miracles, in answer to prayer. And yet we know only in part, fragmentarily. We know just enough to encourage us and to guide us on our way, to sustain us in the weariness of our pilgrimage; but what we see sends us on our way light-hearted, filled with the confidence and joy of those who have found the meaning of union with God.

V

This silent fellowship in prayer must be supplemented whenever God sends the opportunity — and when does He not send it?

— by the fellowship of service. We are members one of another, the bond of brotherhood in Christ unites us. Here, perhaps, more than anywhere else the word *failure* is written large across the history of the Christian Church. No doubt if we choose to fasten our attention upon what has been done it will seem large in amount; especially will it seem so if we choose to put it in contrast with the failure of others. Those who write books on the results of Christian activity or on the fruits of missions, and who bring into contrast the works of the heathen and of the Christian, have a wonderful story to tell. But it is not the story of the Christian Church as a social force; it only gives a catalogue of selected phenomena. The history of the attempt of the Christian Church to transform human society into the kingdom of God, to convert and to spiritualize the world, is the history hitherto of tremendous failure — failure not because the instruments and energies at the disposal of the Church were incompetent to the task, but failure because the Church as a whole has not really attempted the task but abandoned the ideals of the Gospel for the methods of

worldliness. The "Called out" soon went back to the soft clothing of the Kings' Houses they were supposed to have abandoned for the leather and locusts of the desert. So we have the spectacle, not of a Church vibrant with spiritual energy and a converted world, but of an unconverted world now at length turning contemptuously upon a Church which has sacrificed its vocation to men-pleasing! One can conceive no greater example of spiritual incompetence than the life of the ordinary member of the Church considered as an attempt to translate the Gospel life into terms of contemporary living.

But no time has called louder for that understanding of the Communion of Saints which is the realization of the Church as a brotherhood than the time in which we live. We thought we had got rid of classes in getting rid of a recognized aristocracy. Now it turns out that within the democratic state it is possible to have social classes as sharply accented as any in the societies of the past. If to-day class distinctions are rather vague, at least class hatred is distinct enough. The Church which in the nature of things is so-

cially conservative more and more incurs the hatred of the radical and, as they think themselves, the progressive. The Christian community tends more and more to be limited, not by its own withdrawal from the world, or by its enforcement of such spiritual discipline as would exclude merely nominal adherents, but by the withdrawal of multitudes who see in the Church an instrument of a hostile class or an institution which is utterly indifferent to what they feel to be their vital interest. If the Church is to make headway against growing opposition and revolt, if it is to survive at all in the state of the future, it must set itself to realize the Communion of Saints. It cannot do this by the patronage of social service. It must vindicate its right to be called a brotherhood, not by fussy charity or incompetent attempts to direct social movements, but by the demonstration that the existing membership of the Church is in reality a brotherhood — a brotherhood in Christ. When one can see that the membership of our parishes is plainly being unified on the ground of membership in Christ, when silly social distinctions break down because we have found an

underlying bond of union, when love of the brethren rules all social relations, then it may be possible for us to go to the world with a demonstration of the reality of our religion that it will be unable to resist, as when in the first centuries of the life of the Church the impression produced upon the heathen was, "See how these Christians love one another!" Until those days return, until we can present to the world the aspect of a communion of saints, it is not likely that our propaganda will be very effective.

VI

We have hitherto thought of the Communion of Saints as the Church Militant here on Earth. But the frontiers of the Church Militant are not the frontiers of the Body of Christ, and therefore not of the Communion of Saints. The Church Militant is that part of the whole Church with which we are particularly concerned, it is said; and that no doubt is true, if we remember that it is a *part* that we are concerned with, and that a part cannot adequately be

understood or dealt with except we have constantly in view its relation to the whole. The colony of a state has no doubt its own local interests which are important and are necessarily in the foreground of its legislation, but it cannot therefore neglect the fact that it is a colony and that its relations to the mother country are vital. Each member of the Body has its own individual office, but it could not fulfill that office except it were connected with the central life. The vine branch puts forth its blossoms and bears its fruit, but only on condition that it abides in the vine. So the Church Militant exists at all only through its inherence in the mystical Body as a whole. If, conceivably, it were to forget its relation to the whole Body it must die.

The Communion of Saints comprises not only the Church Militant but the Church Expectant and the Church Triumphant. In comparison with the total life and activity of the Body of Christ the Church Militant appears as an outlying province of the kingdom of God. We are apt to think and speak as though the unseen provinces of the Church were rather unimportant outlying depend-

encies of the Church on earth. This thought needs to be reversed. The Church on earth at any time is numerically insignificant compared with the totality of the Body of Christ, and its failure will not be the failure of the whole Body, but the failure of certain members to realize their vocation. Our Lord recognized failure as well as success as entering into the experience of His Church on earth. There would be dead branches to be removed and tares to be gathered up and burned, which surely implies not simply the *individual* failure with which we are wont to identify it, but that failure of a whole local church which has occurred over and over again in the history of Christendom. But the Body of Christ which has sought to express itself in this or that place and has failed because of the lack of human co-operation renews the attempt elsewhere.

The foundation expression of the Communion of Saints, that we are members one of another and all of Christ, holds necessarily for *all* the members of the Body. There is nothing that one can see in death that can destroy spiritual relationship or spiritual activity. The members of the Body

do not rejoice and suffer together because they are in a certain place but because they are members one of another. The modes of the activity of the members one toward another no doubt change through the change in their outer and material relationship; but change does not mean cessation, nor does the cessation of certain activities mean the abolition of the possibility of all activity. There is no way of conceiving the various states of the Church — Militant, Expectant, Triumphant — as remaining in relation one to another except as we conceive their activity as being exercised through reciprocal offices. The Communion of Saints is no longer a *communion* of the whole Body of Christ except as that communion is made effective through the influence of life upon life. It will not do to say that all members of the Church are influenced and acted upon by the one Head of the Body, and in their turn respond directly to His influence and action. That is not the Biblical doctrine of the Communion of Saints: that doctrine is that there is a relation of member with member because of their participation in the Incarnate life. A graphic figure of the

Communion of Saints would represent it, not as an infinite number of points each connected by a line with a common center; it would rather be the figure of a net in which all points are connected one with another as well as with the common center. The movements of the planets in a solar system are regulated not only by the pull of the central sun, but by the total system of forces resulting from the several pulls of the planets on one another.

VII

If we are to think in terms of Biblical teaching and Catholic theology we are bound to think of the Communion of Saints as the totality of those in Christ in the constant exercise of spiritual activities toward one another. All these we must conceive as being profoundly interested in one another. And from the nature of the Body as a system of *inter-acting* members we should certainly infer some sort of action of member upon member. But we are not left to inference. This world and "the other

world," as we call it, are nowhere in Scripture represented to us as so separated one from another that intercommunication is impossible. Naturally, when it is a question of the Communion of Saints the Old Testament is not available — we must wait for evidence of that sort until the ascending Christ leads His troop of captives through the lifted gates of heaven. But as to the fact of constant and ready communication of a sort between the two worlds, we have but to think of the angelic ministries, the accounts of which are so outstanding features in the history of God's dealings with Israel under the old covenant. Angels are of the same kingdom as we, and their offices in relation to that Body and their constant ministrations to its members are continually brought home to us as we follow the narratives of the Gospels and the writing of the first pages of Church history in the Acts and in the Epistles. We need only our Lord's teaching to assure us of the ministry of angels in behalf of men. He Himself experienced their ministry in two great crises of His life. When the devil left Him, defeated in his attempt to seduce Him from

the severities of His mission, "Angels came and ministered unto Him."[27] When the end of that tragedy which was His life drew near and He was passing through the bitter agony of the Garden and had offered Himself wholly to His Father's will then, as so often happens when God declines to grant our will, He sends strength to carry out His will; "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him."[28] It was but a little later that He declared the entire willingness of His death in that it was even now avoidable did He will to call for heavenly rescue, when He rebuked the rash resistence of St. Peter; "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels."[29] That we too have a share in the ministrations of heaven He declared when He taught us of our Guardian Angels; "I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."[30] The ministry

[27] St. Mat. 4: 11.
[28] St. Lk. 22: 43.
[29] St. Mat. 26: 53.
[30] St. Mat. 18: 10.

of angels to men is the familiar experience of the Apostolic Church. The angels know what is taking place in the Church and are interested in it; "For I think that God hath set forth the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."[31] But specially are they interested in the mystery of God's purpose unfolded in the Incarnation; "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." St. Peter reports the Gospel as preached by the Apostles as "things which the angels desire to look into."[32] They are part of the heavenly environment of the earthly Church; "Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."[33] Their relation to us is one of continual ministry; "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do

[31] I Cor. 4:9.
[32] I Tim. 3:16 and I Pet. 1:12.
[33] Heb. 12:22.

service for them who shall be the heirs of salvation." [34] They are filled with rejoicing at the triumphs of God's grace; "I say unto you, that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." [35]

VIII

The question we are tempted to raise, why, if there are also ministries of the saints of any sort to their brethren on the earth, we do not find the fullness of allusion to them that we do to the ministry of angels, almost answers itself. The *saint* is a product of the Incarnation, and heaven became populous with saints only as the harvest of sanctity sown by the Incarnate Word was gathered in after the Ascension of our Lord and the work of His Spirit in the Body of His Incarnation. Its knowledge of the ministry of angels the Church inherited from the revelation of the old covenant, and had only to confirm and enrich by its own ever-widening experience. A knowledge of its relation

[34] Heb. 1 : 14.
[35] St. Lk. 15 : 10.

to the saints with God had to be experienced and thought out as more and more of the brotherhood passed to be "with Christ"; and especially as the hosts of the martyrs thronged the ascent of heaven. Then the heart of the Church followed those it loved, and the busy thought and glowing prayers that were called out by the new aspect that death had acquired through the transforming power of our Lord's death and resurrection led them to try to make clear the mutual obligations and privileges growing out of the fact that all — both quick and dead — live unto God as the members of His dear Son.

There was never any doubt at all in the mind of the Church as to its own obligation, or rather its own blessed privilege, to pray for those who had passed through the grave and gate of death to a nearer and more clearly realized union with our Lord. As was the case with the knowledge of the ministry of angels, so the duty and privilege of praying for the dead came to the Church by inheritance from the old covenant. The earliest Christian graves we know bear on them inscriptions which embody prayers for

the loved ones whose mortal bodies had been laid within them. The earliest Liturgies which have come to us contain prayers for all the holy dead. The writings of the early Christians raise no doubt in the matter. For centuries there was no pause in the ceaseless stream of prayers that flowed from the Church on earth through the gates of heaven. Nor was there any doubt in the Church on earth that these ascending prayers met and mingled with the prayers of the ever-increasing multitudes of the pure ones who sing about the throne of God and of the Lamb and who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Nor was there any doubt of the right of those who were still here in the pilgrim state — in *via* — to cry to the saints who are with God for the aid of their intercessions — no more doubt than there was of their right to ask the aid of the prayers of the neighbor who knelt beside them at the early Mass. Then the Reformation came, and an awful, heart-chilling silence fell over large parts of the world that still professed the Name of Christ.

IX

Such is the doctrine of the Communion of Saints as it has grown to expression through the age-long experience of the Catholic Church. It was out of these various elements of Christian thought and experience that this article of the Creed grew. We must remember that any article of the Creed or of Catholic theology has a history, and can only be understood in relation to that history. An article of the Creed cannot mean anything that we may happen to want it to mean to-day; we cannot empty it of a good part of its content and still go on flattering ourselves that we are holding the Faith. The Faith is a thing committed, and what has been actually committed we learn from a study of the past. The Communion of Saints, we recall, was inserted in the Creed and became an article of faith of universal obligation, early in the fifth century: its actual content, therefore, is the content of the Christian thought about the Communion of Saints at that time. By that time, as we shall see later on, the meaning

of the Apostolic teaching about the Body of Christ and of the relations of the members of that Body one to another, had been worked out by a Christian experience of four centuries. Christians had long been praying for the dead, invoking the prayers of the dead, and experiencing the blessings that came to them through the intercessions of their brethren who were "with Christ." The only doubt that was ever raised as to the right and the utility of invoking the intercessions of the dead came now and again from a strayed heretic who was promptly repudiated by the Catholic mind and whose errors only served to put in a clearer light the mind of the Church in consequence of the utterances of Christian doctors called out in refutation of his error. When the article, "I believe in the Communion of Saints," went into the Creed, *it connoted the fully developed doctrine of the fifth century and it must connote that doctrine to-day.*

X

It cannot be said that the theologians of the Anglican Church since the Reformation

have shown much understanding, or pointed the way to much practical use, of the Communion of Saints. I shall later take up the subject of the action of the Anglican Church at the period of the Reformation; but whatever was done at that time, it is certain that all cultus of the Saints disappeared not only from the Anglican formularies of worship but from Anglican belief and practice. We may perhaps take Bishop Pearson as a perfectly representative theologian of the Stuart period — Dr. Sweete calls him "the Aquinas of the Anglican Communion." Pearson is not a victim of that high Anglican insularity which holds that none of the Saints are in heaven: "All those," he says, "which were spoken of as saints then in earth, if truly such and departed so, are now, and shall forever continue, saints in heaven." [36] He goes on to state the doctrine of the Communion of Saints in very clear and unmistakable terms: "The Saints of God living in the Church of Christ, are in communion with all the saints departed out of this life, and admitted to the presence of God. Indeed the Communion of Saints in the Church of

[36] Pearson, *On the Creed*, pp. 625–6.

Christ with those which are departed is demonstrated by their communion with the saints alive. For if I have communion with a saint of God, as such, while he liveth here, I must still have communion with him when he is departed hence; because the foundation of that communion cannot be removed by death. The mystical union between Christ and His Church, the spiritual conjunction of the members to the Head, is the true foundation of that communion which one member hath with another, all members living and increasing by the same influence which they receive from Him. But death, which is nothing else but the separation of the soul from the body, maketh no separation in the mystical union, no breach of the spiritual conjunction; consequently there must continue the same communion, because there remaineth the same foundation. Indeed, the saint departed, before his death, had some communion with the hypocrite, as hearing the Word, professing the faith, receiving the Sacraments together; which being in things only external, as they were common to them both, and all such external action ceasing in the person dead, the hypo-

crite remaining loseth all communion with the saint departed, and the saint surviving ceases to have farther fellowship with the hypocrite dying. But being the true and unfeigned holiness of man, wrought by the powerful influence of the Spirit of God, not only remaineth, but also is improved after death; being the correspondence of the internal holiness was the true communion between their persons in their life, they cannot be said to be divided by death, which has no power over that sanctity by which they were first conjoined." [37] But when it comes to the actual working out of any practical application of this doctrine there is an inexplicable failure.

We may, perhaps, take Dr. Sweete as representative of the conservative Anglicanism of to-day, which aims to preserve the Caroline tradition. He is however weaker than Pearson in that he seems to hold that the Saints have not yet been admitted to heaven. This and other Anglican failures to grasp the fullness of Catholic doctrine is due to an over-emphasis on the value of the utterances of the primitive Fathers. The

[37] Ibid., pp. 530–1.

primitive Church has no peculiar authority; whatever authority it has is not because it is *primitive* but because it is *Church.* In some ways the utterances of the writers of the second century which have come down to us, represent a tentative and immature attempt to think out the data of the Christian revelation. No one, for example, would care to assent to all that they say about our Lord or about the Holy Spirit. We do not think that their utterances are heretical because some of them fall quite short of the later dogmatic formularies of the Church; but we think that they represent an immature stage of thought as compared with the stage of the great theologians of the fourth century. Thus some of their utterances in regard to the state of the dead show, in the light of later Christian conclusions, that they had not thought out their premises. This weakness, which is quite easy to understand in the case of such writers as St. Justin Martyr for example, ought not to lead astray a student like Dr. Sweete. He says: "Were the spirits of believers received at death into heaven? Or did they await the resurrection in an intermediate state? This was the first

question that demanded an answer; and the answer was given by the Church of the second century with no uncertain voice. An immediate reception into heaven seemed to carry with it the abandonment of belief in the resurrection of the body, and it gave to the disciple an advantage which the Master had not claimed; for did not Christ himself descend into Hades before He ascended into heaven? Catholic Christians, therefore, from the time of Justin and Irenaeus thought of the souls of the departed as in an expectant attitude which was neither heaven nor hell; but while all awaited the final Judgment, the godly awaited it in a better place, and the unrighteous in a worse." [38]

But even were it true that the saints are not yet in heaven — a belief quite contrary to the theology of the Catholic Church, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western — I fail to see that that fact has any vital bearing on the belief in the validity of the Invocation of Saints. In whatever part of the universe we may conceive the Saints to be they are still living members of the Body of Christ — they still live unto God and unto

[38] Sweete, *The Holy Catholic Church*, p. 214.

their brethren. Their separation from us and our ignorance of their exact state, as Dr. Sweete himself sees, constitute no obstacle to communion; and his objection that our ignorance of the conditions under which they live is such an obstacle would seem to have no weight.[39] My prayers for others, and my desire for their prayers for me, is not conditioned on knowledge of intimate detail of our lives: the prayer we are thinking of is essentially the expression of our love one to another. I may know nothing about my

[39] "We know ourselves to be in communion with tens of thousands of living saints who are equally unknown to us. A common faith and hope and love, common sacraments, a common aim in life, the possession of the same Spirit of grace, membership in the same Divine family, draw together Christian people in every part of the globe; and this experience encourages the hope that communion with the faithful departed is not hindered by the mere fact that they are beyond sight and hearing, and that even their names, except in the case of a few relations and friends or of greater saints, are wholly unknown. A more serious obstacle to fellowship with the dead lies in our ignorance of the conditions under which they live. We cannot realize the order into which they have passed; it is beyond our cognizance, and very little has been revealed to us about their state, beyond the fact that they exist, are conscious, and are with Christ." Sweete, Ibid., p. 211.

dead friend but that he exists and is, I believe, with Christ. But I still love him and want to express my love. Prayer is the outlet for my love under present circumstances. I know that my friend still loves me and that prayer will be the available means of his spiritual approach to me also. It is not in either case necessary that details of life should be known — though I am not prepared to admit that they are not known in some degree.

In fact one feels that back of this conservative Anglican teaching there is not a solidly thought out theology, but a refusal to think beyond a certain point because of a kind of timidity as to consequences. Dr. Sweete says: "The intercession of the saints at rest is a legitimate and necessary consequence of the fellowship in prayer that unites the whole Body of Christ. The invocation of departed saints is a practice based upon this truth, which is neither primitive nor universal, and which has been found to be dangerous. It is earnestly to be hoped that no false sentiment may lead members of the English Church who realize the need of closer communion with the holy dead to fall

back upon so precarious a way of obtaining it." [40] Again, it is quite illegitimate to isolate the teaching of the Church for a couple of centuries, and those the centuries when it was just beginning the process of formulating the truths committed to it — just begun to talk, as it were — and set them in opposition to all the rest of Christian teaching. That is not the appeal of the Anglican communion as we shall see later.

XI

If we now turn back to the history of the Church and inquire as to the development of the practice of the Invocation of

[40] Still less legitimate are attempts to prevent the practice of the Invocation of Saints by utterances like the following. The late Bp. John Wordsworth in the Preface to his pamphlet, *The Invocation of Saints and the Twenty-Second Article,* says, "But if they still continue to circulate books recommending it (Invocation), and to inculcate the practice upon the young . . . they must expect to be openly and individually rebuked, and to bear the reproach of being disturbers of the peace and work, as well as in some degree, of the faith of the Church." This is truly Papal.

the Saints — what was the ground for asking for the prayers of the dead — we are met by the naked denial on the part of certain writers that praying to the dead is in any way involved in the Church's faith in the Communion of Saints, but rather that it is a practice taken over bodily from Paganism: that the cultus of Pagan divinities was simply transferred to the Church. That in many places, as a matter of fact, the Saint is simply the local Pagan deity renamed. This of course was the contention of many Protestants at the time of the Reformation and since. From their point of view one of the great achievements of the Reformation was the cleansing of the Church from Paganism. It is also the contention of many modern Rationalist writers, especially the writers upon comparative religion. It is an assertion which, unfortunately, is taken up by a certain number of Anglican students. Dr. Bigg will serve as an example. In his delightful *Wayside Sketches in Ecclesiastical History* he says: "These kindly Saints who take their people as they find them and do not ask too much, have stepped into the vacant place of the good little household gods,

the Lares and Penates, who love the poor, and allowed themselves to be beaten when things went wrong. We see also something of the methods of the first missionaries. They did not pitch their expectations too high. People brought cattle and sacrificed them before the church of Felix, just as they had done before the temple of Venus. There would be a difference in the ritual and the flesh was distributed among the poor pilgrims, but the Campanian peasant would see little change." [41]

This is a little too facile to be convincing. There was no doubt, especially in the early Middle Ages, a certain amount of borrowing from Pagan sources and adaptation of Pagan rites. It may have happened now and again that a Christian Saint slipped quietly into the place of a Pagan god. There may have been blunders by which the two were confused. But such things will have been quite exceptional in the life of the Church and not in any time or place the rule of its action. I do not know that any one has had the temerity to assert outright that the practice of asking the prayers of the

[41] Bigg, p. 49.

Departed has no root in Christianity but is purely a Pagan graft. But the impression produced by the citing of what has the appearance of borrowing from Pagan worship is that there was and would have been no Invocation of Saints in the Church had it not been for Pagan influences.

There are several facts that seem to me decisively to counter that. The practice of asking for the prayers of the Dead grew up in the Church without any noticeable opposition. Any one at all familiar with early Christian history knows that the temper of the leaders of the Church was not one that was easily imposed upon by extra-Christian innovations. The most outstanding feature of the great Christian theologians of the first six centuries was their jealousy of all incroachments upon or false interpretations of the faith they believed themselves to have received from the Apostles. The reproach that is usually thrown at them is that they were a set of narrow-minded bigots, whose thought was constantly occupied with heresy hunting. And if there was any one fact on which they were particularly sensitive to error it was upon the uniqueness of God.

Their first great battle was to prevent that particular inroad of Paganism which would have reduced our Lord to the rank of a demi-god. The whole history of the Conciliar period is the history of a battle for the full Deity of Christ in the background of which was the profound conviction that there is only one God. And yet we are asked to believe that during this same period these same Church leaders were good-naturedly tolerating, if not coöperating in, a movement which was rapidly bringing back into the worship of the Church that degradation of the notion of God which they were, in their character as champions of Orthodoxy, spending their lives to oppose.

We must guard ourselves carefully from permitting a chronological separation in these two movements — one towards strenuous Orthodoxy and the other toward a toleration of Paganism. It is not that the rigid orthodoxy of the Church relaxed after a time and that then Paganism began its insidious entry almost unnoticed, in the guise of the Invocation of the Dead. The fact is, as we shall demonstrate later, that precisely the same great Doctors of the Church who

fought the tremendous battle for the integrity of the Christian notion of God the Blessed Trinity and of the Incarnation are those in whose writings we find our evidence for the legitimacy of the practice of invoking the prayers of the Departed.

And further: these great Christian leaders, especially in the earlier stage of the conflict, were not only engaged in safe-guarding the Christian notion of God, but they were at the same time engaged in a life and death struggle with Paganism. Is it to be believed that the men who stood the whole shock of the Pagan state, who offered their lives freely for the defense of Christian belief and the upholding of Christian morals, were at the same time taking over, or countenancing the taking over, of one great section of Pagan cultus? It will take much more evidence than that of local or occasional lapses into Paganism through ignorance or blundering to convince us that the very Saints whom the Universal Church honors at its altars were guilty of such action.

And again: we are not ignorant of the history of Christian missions from the time of St. Paul on. Is it true that they are char-

acterized by a facile eclecticism? Is it true that they attempted to win their victories by a process of easy compromise with Paganism? Is it not true, rather, that the books of all the Rationalists are filled with denunciations of Christian missionaries because of their alleged iconoclasm — their needless destruction of things good and beautiful — their narrow and ignorant dealing with the culture of the nations they were converting? Are not the annals of missions filled with accounts of the destruction of Pagan temples and deities, and the Canons of Christian Councils with the denunciation of Pagan practices and rites? And in the face of all this we are asked to believe that the worship of Paganism was taken over and engrafted upon the Church!

It is obvious that none of the converts to Christianity would come to their new religion with an unoccupied mind: all would come out of an environment of religious ideas and prepossessions which would have to be wholly eradicated to make way for the new faith, or be modified and refashioned to fit it. When old and new were essentially alike there would be required nothing

more than a redirection of activity. For example, Jew and Pagan alike came to Christianity with traditions of fasting: they would simply need to be taught the round of Christian fasts. Both alike would be familiar with the practice of praying for the dead, and would find their ancestral practice quite harmonious with their new religion. In the case of both Jew and Pagan there were broad frontiers of contact with Christianity which would accelerate the transition from old to new. There were also sharp contrasts and oppositions where wrenching and painful sacrifices would be required as the condition of obedience to Christ. Where would the practice of asking for the help of the dead fall?

There is no doubt that the Pagan world was quite accustomed to the practice of invoking the dead. Ancestor worship was widespread. When the better Pagan minds thought this out and tried to find a rational basis for their religious cultus, they thought to the conclusion of a single divine essence which, however, was divisible and communicable. Of this essence were the gods of their pantheon and also the souls of heroes

and virtuous men. Of this immortal and divine essence was the *genius* which survived them after their death and which took its place in the circle of the Immortals. This was the object of their cultus. Each family would hold that its own ancestors had their place among the Immortals and would make them the object of a special cult.[42] "There was no recognized system of canonization; the family would create its own appropriate hero, and the mere fact of death, the passage from earth into the unseen, constituted a claim to reverence and worship. Countless inscriptions belonging to the period with which we are concerned bear witness to the belief in the general power of the departed to assist the living. Parents invoke the souls of their children, children the souls of their parents, wives and husbands, brothers and sisters, turn each to the other, the living to the dead, for help and protection."[43] Unless the convert from Paganism found something in Christianity which denied the possibility of reaching his

[42] Tixeront, *Hist. des Dogmes*, Vol. I, p. 19.

[43] Stewart, *Doctrina Rom. de Invocat. Sanct.*, pp. 44–5.

dead by his prayers; unless he found that his new religion raised an impassable barrier between him and the souls of the departed; he would quite simply go on doing much as he had done. But in fact, he would find the situation even cleared for him; that in the case, at least, of those of his loved ones who died in the Lord, he was not to be sorry as men without hope because he was assured that they were safe in Christ. He would find that prayers for those who died in the Lord were uninterrupted by the fact of death. Would he find that a prohibition had been formulated against his asking for the prayers of those for whom he prayed — against his understanding of the Communion of Saints as looking both ways?

I do not know of any ground for thinking that he would. No such prohibition anywhere appears, and consequently the practice of invocation would have gone on, so far as the Pagan convert was concerned. The practice would fit in quite naturally with his new faith, there would be no break with the past in this respect. There would no doubt at the early period we are contemplating be no formal doctrine of Invocation.

But formal doctrines follow, not precede, practice. The history of dogmatic development is the history of seeking formal ground for the justification of that which already exists. The Church did not wait for the action of the Council of Nicaea before it began to worship our Lord. There would have been no Council of Nicaea if the Church had not already been worshiping our Lord as God. This worship of the Church began from the day of its origin, and it settled the questions which subtle minds raised about that worship as they arose.

These words of Dr. Goudge put the matter plainly. "There is always a great difference between the mind of the theologian and that of the great body of the faithful, and the advantage is not necessarily all on one side. Is it for a moment likely that the thousands of simple minded converts from heathenism at once abandoned the attitude which they had adopted toward their dead? The converts in Japan to-day, I understand, are not at all disposed to do so. . . . Why should the converts of the early Church have done so? So far from Christianity destroying the basis on which their practice had

rested, it would rather have strengthened it. It would have made their sense of union with the departed deeper than it had been before; it would have afforded a stronger rather than a weaker support to belief in the activity of the dead in the unseen world. If they had hoped for help from the dead before, we may be sure that they continued to hope for it; if they had paid honors to the heroes of the heathen world, we may be sure that they would pay them to the heroes of the Faith." [44]

It need not be denied that the process indicated would have its dangers. But the early Christian community had not that fear of the dangers of religion which has become so marked a characteristic of the churches of the Anglican rite. As the Pagan stream flowed into the Church it brought with it certain crudities of thought and action which tended to lower the ideals of the Christian standards. There has been prevalent at every age of the Church's progress a certain amount of superstition. What the Church is trying to do is to take the crude

[44] Goudge, *The Invocation of Saints and the Cult of the Blessed Virgin,* pp. 16 and 17.

material and refashion it and convert it to its own use. This takes time. The Church took in the heathen on the basis of a positive instruction for Baptism which differed in amount and thoroughness from time to time and from place to place. If some heathen thoughts and practices lingered in the life of the newly converted that is not strange; nor is it unparalleled in our own contemporary experience. The Church today takes in great numbers of Protestants and leaves them very much untouched as to their religious ideas. There are many Protestant parishes in the Church which are using a Prayer Book which they do not at all understand and upon which they are imposing an interpretation drawn from their ancestral Protestantism. It is no doubt true that the popular mind has in times and places misunderstood the use of invocation and has prayed to the Saints as though they had original power. But are we to revise our religion on the basis of leaving out everything that has been or can be abused? Is it not true that many people in the Church misconceive the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity? Do they not in fact pray to the three

Sacred Persons as though they were three separate gods? In particular do they not in the light of their understanding or misunderstanding of our Lord's mediatorial office plead with Him to stand between them and an angry God, very much as the Italian peasant is alleged to plead with the Blessed Virgin for protection? Are we to give up the doctrine of the Trinity, or are we to try to enlighten people as to the meaning of that dogma of our religion? It would seem that we are to blame, not the peasant, but the Roman authorities which allow the use of forms that are misleading. But I do not see why, either because of the error of the Roman authorities or of the peasant, I should deny the practice of Invocation.

XII

We shall not expect to find invocations of the dead in the Old Testament because the Communion of Saints in the sense of the Creed was impossible until the Incarnation and work of our Lord had opened heaven to all believers. Neither had the Old Testa-

ment worked out a consistent eschatology. The revelation of the Old Testament and the work of its heroes and prophets was primarily concerned with the kingdom of God on earth, which was the present sphere of God's manifestation and the treasury of the promises which illumined the future. In this national vocation of Israel the world beyond the grave played no part. And yet it cannot be that human beings anywhere are without interest in that world. Whatever may be man's primary interest and whatever his beliefs, he cannot stand beside the graves of those whom he has loved without questionings as to the future arising in his mind. And although the revealed religion of Israel concerned itself with the fortunes of the kingdom in the world and of the Israelites' relation to that; and held them firm in their devotion to it by faith in the promises of the coming of God with power to rescue Israel from the hands of its enemies; and closed its vision of the future, now with the song of triumph floating over the field of Israel's victory, and now with the terrifying catastrophe of the Day of the Lord, which is only darkness and not light; yet

here and there in the record of Israel's thought we catch glimpses of its belief in a life following death, and also some hints of what the current conceptions of that life were. It was from this background of beliefs in the unseen world beyond that the Jewish convert would emerge to take up the revelation of the Gospel and begin the process of the readjustment of old and new.

The outstanding feature of the Old Testament, its insistence that all religion is revelation, that the very minutiæ of its laws were enacted by God, carries with it a keen sense of the interest of heaven in earth. The Israelites' conception of the heavenly world, so far as it went, was clear enough. It was not the world of philosophy, vacant save for the presence of a god vaguely conceived; it was a populous world, filled with angelic presences, and their constant action on behalf of men. The angels were the ordinary executants of the will of God, of whose ministries the Fathers had had constant experience. Hardly a striking event in Israel's history was unattended by angelic appearances and ministries. It is needless to labor this point. But was there any

human interest in the beyond? This constant tide of souls which poured out from human life — were they conscious and interested? The Fathers, the national heroes, the great prophets, the psalmists, had they passed into silence and away from all thought and care for those for whom in their life time they had so passionately labored? Was it to be conceived that the interests of the Covenant which were so dear to the heart of God, and which had called out on the part of His servants such unlimited self-sacrifice that they had willingly poured out their lives unto death, had now ceased to interest them at all? God's interest in Israel went on; and was it to be conceived that the interest of an Abraham, a Moses, an Isaiah had ceased? Or was it to be conceived that they had passed out of relation to God's present work and filled their lives with new interests? What we should look for in the Old Testament is some indication of the continual interest of the dead in what had been the object of their devotion before death, and whether it was conceived that there was or could be any *activity* appropriate to this interest.

ON PRAYERS TO THE DEAD

In the earliest conceptions of Israel as to the effect of death we find that death was not regarded as making any real breach in the family. The family was a unit and the fact that certain members of it had died does not seem to have been understood as wholly removing them from the family. The common synonym for death, that a man was gathered to his people or his fathers, meant that he had gone to join that part of his family which was assembled elsewhere. This place of meeting came to be known as Sheol, the common dwelling-place of the dead. Those in Sheol were not conceived as without influence on those members of the family who were still on earth, and they themselves were influenced by the fortunes of their living descendants.[45]

This background of the continued interest of the dead and of their active interest as intercessors for their brethren, is not infrequently indicated in the Old Testament. When God is called upon to "remember" His servants as the basis of an appeal of some sort made to Him, the clear implication is of a world in which these same serv-

[45] Charles, p. 27 ff.

ants were active and the friends of God; the force of this inference is increased when we recall our Lord's exposition of the title of God, as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, as implying their continued existence because God is not a God of the dead but of the living. It is in the light of this general principle that we must read Moses' passionate appeal to God in his intercession for Israel after the sin of the Golden Calf. "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever." [46] Through the prophet Jeremiah God protests that because of the sins of Israel He would not spare them even at the intercession of His greatest saints. "Then said the Lord unto me, though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth." [47] The same thought is in

[46] Ex. 32: 13.
[47] Jer. 15: 1.

God's protest through Ezekiel. "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, yet they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, said the Lord GOD." [48] Again, Isaiah's appeal to God is enforced by what is to all intents an appeal to the intercession of Israel ancestors who are almost reproached for their forgetfulness of their children. "Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not." [49] The same thought of the interest of the dead is found in the Psalms. "Lord, remember David, in all his afflictions . . . for thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed." [50] And of king Abijah it is said that "Nevertheless for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem." [51] A fuller expression of this belief in the continued interest of the holy men of Israel in the fortunes of their descendants is found in the Second Book of Maccabees where

[48] Ezek. 14: 14.
[49] Is. 63: 16.
[50] Ps. 132: 1 and 10.
[51] I Kg. 15: 4.

Judas sees in vision Jeremiah the Prophet praying for Israel. "And this was his vision: that Onias who had been high priest, a virtuous and a good man, reverent in bearing, gentle in manner, well spoken also and exercised from a child in all points of virtue, holding up his hands prayed for the whole body of the Jews. This done, in like manner there appeared a man with gray hairs, and exceeding glorious, who was of a wonderful and excellent majesty. Then Onias answered, saying, this is a lover of the brethren, who prayeth much for the people, and for the holy city, Jeremiah the prophet of God." [52] Finally, this state of the dead, from which we shall certainly be able to infer the fact of their interest in and intercession for their brethren is marvelously depicted in a well known passage in the book of Wisdom. "But the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seem to die: and their departure is taken for misery; and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of

[52] II Mac. 15: 12–14.

men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them, and found them worthy of Himself. As the gold in the furnace hath He tried them, and received them as a burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the peoples, and the Lord shall reign over them for ever and ever." [53]

With these prepossessions the Jew would come to the Gospel. And what would he find there? Would he be told that his thought was erroneous, and that the dead of his nation had ceased to take or to express any interest in it; that those of his family whom he had buried were dead to him and to the world, and that the best that he could do would be to forget them? Not at all. He would rather find a clearing up of his vague notion of immortality, and an explication of the real ground henceforth of the relation of the living and the dead on the basis of their union in Christ. What-

[53] Wis. 3: 1–8.

ever practices he may have been accustomed to as a mode of expressing his relation to the dead were, for the time being, so far as we can see, left untouched, awaiting the action of the mature thought of the Church upon them. This background then of a belief in the existence of the blessed dead "with God"; a belief that the living should pray for the dead; a belief in the continued interest of the dead in the living and of their intercession for them; a belief that in our prayers to God we may appeal to Him on the basis of the intercessions of the dead — all this constitutes the not inconsiderable data from which the early Jewish convert to Christianity set out to shape his belief in the Communion of Saints with the aid of the added data furnished by the new revelation in Christ.

What the convert would learn of the dead from his new religion is that they were "living unto God,"[54] and that they are "in Christ," and that therefore he was not to sorrow for them "as others who have no hope,"[55] and that, far from having passed

[54] St. Lk. 20: 38.
[55] I Thess. 4: 13 ff.

into a state in which they had no relation to their friends on earth they are still of the same Body.[56] This would be quite a sufficient basis for continuing their practice of asking for the prayers of their beloved dead.[57] That they did go on doing so is admitted. The evidence that they did so is conclusive. Such prayers seem to Dr. Sweete only to express "the natural and innocent desire of simple people to be remembered in the prayers of their nearest and dearest, whom they believed to be with Christ."[58] If I understand Dr. Sweete he means us to infer that while such desires are innocent and natural they have no reality corresponding to them. But simple Christians at least found enough comfort in them to lead them to continue so praying until the present day.

[56] Heb. 12:22 ff.

[57] I am of course speaking in the broadest way of the whole Pagan and Jewish situation. I do not mean that all the beliefs I am summing up under the caption *Paganism*, were alike in all times or places. I am simply speaking of a prevalent attitude of Paganism, and especially classical Paganism.

[58] Sweete, p. 231.

XIII

It is necessary to be clear about the primitive character of these simple invocations of the dead as there is a tendency to confuse them with the "Invocation of Saints," technically so called, and therefore to regard all prayers to the dead as lacking in an entirely primitive character. "The cult of the Saints, we recall," says Tixeront, "was at the beginning but the cult of the Martyrs, comprehending that of the Apostles. Those alone, among the faithful of Christ, received the homage of the community, who had imitated their divine Master to the death and had rendered witness to Him by the outpouring of their blood." [59] This is no doubt quite true; but it concerns the formal cult of the Martyrs at the altars of the Church and is not to be confused with the invocation of the dead by the faithful. The cult of the Martyrs came, and could come, only when persecution had given Martyrs to the Church and the Church had realized the value of the gift. The asking of the prayers of the

[59] Tixeront, p. 62.

ON PRAYERS TO THE DEAD

Christian dead began as soon as there were any Christian dead. The evidence of this is in the inscriptions on their graves. Here are a few of them.[60]

JANUARIA, BE THOU WELL REFRESHED, AND INTERCEDE FOR US.

MATRONATA MATRONA, WHO LIVED ONE YEAR AND FIFTY-TWO DAYS, PRAY FOR THY PARENTS.

ATTICUS, SLEEP IN PEACE, SECURE OF THY SALVATION, AND PRAY EARNESTLY FOR OUR SINS.

GENTIAN, A CHRISTIAN, IN PEACE. WHO LIVED TWENTY-ONE YEARS EIGHT MONTHS AND SIXTEEN DAYS. IN THY PRAYERS INTERCEDE FOR US, FOR WE KNOW THOU ART WITH CHRIST.

SABBATIUS, SWEET SOUL, INTERCEDE AND MAKE PETITION FOR THY BROTHERS AND COMPANIONS.

[60] Barnes, *The Early Church in the Light of the Monuments*, p. 156 ff. McGinnis, *The Communion of Saints*, p. 54.

ANATOLIUS TO HIS BELOVED SON WHO LIVED SEVEN YEARS, SEVEN MONTHS, AND TWENTY DAYS. MAY THY SPIRIT REST IN GOD. PRAY FOR THY SISTER.

These to me are of very great importance, not only showing that for the Christian death wrought no separation from the dead in Christ, a conviction that we need always if we are not to lose hold on the meaning of the Communion of Saints as embracing all who are in Christ and having thus constantly realized relations to one another; and we need it if we are to have a proper appreciation of the meaning of the cult of the Martyrs which was so outstanding a feature of the devotional life of the Church during the centuries of persecution and was then merged in the general cult of the Saints. For if from the midst of a community which had no recognized intercourse with the dead, a spiritual hero was suddenly and exceptionally exalted and services were celebrated in his honor and multitudes begged for his prayers, we might conceivably see in this the influence of Paganism, the apotheo-

sis of a hero, the recognition of a demigod. But if all this were exceptional only in degree, if it were but a larger instance of a common and every day happening, then it will retain its entirely Christian character. The simple Christian, as we have just seen, asked the continued prayers of father or mother, child or friend, when they passed to be in a nearer sense with Christ. He felt that so his family was kept complete, that death had not wrecked it. The same thought is plain in the case of the martyr, only now the family is not the group of a few individuals held together by the sense of a physical blood bond: the family of the martyr is the Church, and the martyr is a distinguished son or daughter whom the family delights to honor, and whose intercession it feels will be especially powerful because of the way in which he has identified himself with the life and work of his Master — his passion is so complete a reflection of his Master's passion that he seems almost to identify himself with Him. So at the beginning, M. Tixeront tells us, " The cult of the Martyrs was more or less confounded with that of the Saviour. The Martyr *par excellence* was Christ Himself. His imitators and witnesses but completed

His passion. Master and disciple therefore were united in the commemoration that was made of their death."[61] The service of the Eucharistic sacrifice was felt to be the highest mode of commemoration for them. The sacrifice was offered upon the tomb — over the body — of the Martyr. We have, no doubt, an allusion to this practice so early as the Revelation of St. John.[62] "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth."

This attitude of the Church toward the Martyrs, which subsequently was extended to include all those who gained recognition as Saints in the technical sense, seems sufficient to dispose of the theory held by some Anglican theologians that there are as yet no Saints in heaven. That in itself, if it were true, would not negative our right to ask the prayers of departed friends. Inas-

[61] Tixeront, p. 70 ff.
[62] Rev., 6:9 ff.

much as we can pray on earth, I suppose that those who have come nearer to our Lord's realized presence in the Intermediate State can pray too. Our asking for the prayers of the dead does not depend upon where we conceive them to be, but upon the fact that they are in Christ. But the belief that no human beings are or will be admitted to heaven — to the immediate presence of God — until after the general resurrection is contradicted by the whole teaching of the book of Revelation, by the belief of the Church in regard to the Martyrs, and of its later attitude to all whom it calls Saints. Such belief in the exclusion of the Saints from heaven seems to rest, in the first place, on passages from the earlier Fathers which were only possible before the Church had thought its way to a consistent doctrine on this point; and in the second place, to a theory that the presence of the Saints in heaven now would make the general judgment at the end of the world meaningless. "But to lay the great stress, which so many of our Communion lay, upon the difference between the present condition of even the greatest Saints and the glory of the future

kingdom is surely as little in accordance with the Scripture as it is with the general mind of the Church." That the Saints are now in heaven does not imply that there can be no increase in their beatitude after the Resurrection. It no more counters the teaching of the general Judgment than belief in a particular Judgment at death does.

XIV

We have reached the point now where we can take up the Patristic testimony as the Invocation of Saints as distinguished from the general right of anybody to ask for the intercessions of the holy dead on his behalf. The practice of the Invocation of Saints from the age of the Martyrs on had the widest possible currency and affected the devotional life of the Church in manifold ways. Then, for us Anglicans, came the Reformation, and a barrier was raised between us and the world beyond. Prayers for the Dead and Invocation of the Saints alike passed from the devotional formularies of the Church. The Communion of Saints

shriveled up and became to all intents and purposes, and still remains for the average Anglican, a dead letter. Why and how did this happen? Ought it to have happened? I am not concerned here with prayers for the Dead; they, happily, have been restored in wide practice if not as yet in the authorized services of the Churches of the Anglican communion. As to the Invocation of Saints, I am concerned to show that on its own principles the Anglican Church had no right to reject them, and that the current supposition that it has, in fact, formally rejected them is quite mistaken.

The appeal of the Anglican Church was to antiquity. It did not base its Reformation position upon the Bible interpreted by private judgment, as did the Protestant churches; but it based its claim upon an appeal to the Holy Scriptures as interpreted by the Church of the Fathers. The claim of the Churches of the Anglican Rite to be of the Holy Catholic Church stands or falls by that appeal. If that appeal fails us I do not see that we have any justification for our separate position — we should either unite with the Protestants or submit to Rome.

But clearly the Anglican Church at the Reformation had no doubt of the soundness of its position or of the results of its appeal.

At the risk of needless repetition let us be perfectly clear as to what this appeal is. It is not an appeal to Scripture as against the Church, or as against the current teaching of the Church at that time. It is not an appeal to the Primitive Church; I have already pointed out the fallacy of such an appeal. It is an appeal to the Church in the period of its unity before East and West had been unhappily divided, to the period of the Church when its teaching had all the weight of a united Christendom. This, too, is the period when the Church, having emerged from the era of persecution, was free to devote its energies to the explicit statement of the content of its Faith. It had had time to think its way into, and to appreciate in detail, the meaning and application of the revelation committed to it. Moreover, it was compelled to make its understanding of revelation clear, because after the external assaults upon the kingdom of God had failed through its endurance of hardness in the time of persecution, the

forces of evil concentrated their energies upon the corruption of the Faith that they had not been able to overcome by force. The appeal of the Anglican Church is an appeal to *this united Church of the Conciliar era,* the era of the full statement of the Faith against heretical attacks, the era when the needs of the Church for defenders called to her aid that wonderful group of men, unparalleled in the later history of the Church, whom the Anglican documents know as the old Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops.

This then is the appeal. The Ten Articles of 1536 declare that the Christian faith is "comprehended in the whole body and Canon of the Bible, and also in the three Creeds"; and that these are to be interpreted according to the mind of "holy and approved Doctors of the Church"; and that those opinions are to be utterly refused and rejected "which were of long time past condemned in the four holy Councils." These statements are repeated in the Bishops' Book of 1537 and in the King's Book of 1543.

An act of Parliament of 1558 declares that "Nothing is to be adjudged heresy but that which heretofore has been adjudged by

the authority of the canonical Scriptures or the first four General Councils, or some other General Council." [63]

The Canons of 1571 direct Preachers to see to it, "that they never teach anything in a sermon that they intend to be religiously held and believed by the people, save what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments, and what the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops have collected from the same doctrine." [64]

That the Church of England had no intention of creating a schism or departing from the unity of the Church, but intended in all things to adhere to the Apostolic position of the Early Church appears from Canon XXX of the Canons of 1603 which reads: "Nay, so far was it from the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any such like churches, in all things which they held and practiced, that . . . it doth with reverence retain those ceremonies, which do neither endamage the Church of God, nor offend the minds of

[63] MacColl, *The Reformation Settlement*, p. 35.
[64] Cardwell, *Synodalia*, Vol. I, p. 126.

sober men; and only departed from them in those particular points wherein they were fallen both from themselves and their ancient integrity, and from the Apostolic churches which were their first founders."

This being the nature of the appeal of the Anglican Church we have to apply the test to the practice of asking for the aid of the prayers of the Dead, and, to the practice of invoking certain of the Dead who are recognized as Saints in the technical sense.

XV

But before I begin the citation of passages from the Fathers, I again want to make clear what it is I am attempting. I am *not* attempting a collection of all the passages from the documents of the Early Church which have any bearing upon our subject. There are plenty of such collections in existence, and any of the longer books referred to in the book list prefixed to this volume will give an adequate catena of passages. The inscriptions upon Christian graves, the early Liturgies, the hymns and prayers of the

undivided Church, the writings of its Fathers and Doctors, offer a field from which a vast amount of material bearing upon the subject of Invocation may be gathered. My object requires no such exhaustive presentation of material. I am solely concerned with the demonstration that the Catholic Fathers of the period to which the Church of England appeals for the justification of its position held to the practice of the Invocation of the Dead. If their testimony is good as to other points in the Christian religion I see no reason for rejecting it in this. If they can be quoted as authoritative in the matter of the Deity of our Blessed Lord against the Arians, and in the matter of the constitution of the Church against modern Papalists, and in the matter of the Sacraments against Protestants, I do not see why their testimony as to the legitimacy of the Invocation of Saints should be rejected. Here is the testimony.

XVI

It may be interesting before we proceed with the extracts to look at the summary of

3d and 4th century evidence given us by Kirsch:

"In the third century we find all the essential parts of the Veneration for Martyrs who witnessed to the Faith by their death. The Fathers of the Church and the faithful Laity regarded them as the perfect followers of the Lord and elect friends of God, who attained at once to a special degree of glory in heaven. They were credited after death with the power of protecting by their intercessions with God Christians both living and departed, and of obtaining by their recommendation, while still undergoing sufferings, the reconciliation of notorious sinners, their merits before God being reckoned as compensation for the sinners' penance. Their protection was sought and they were invoked to intercede with God on behalf of both the Faithful on earth and the Faithful departed. Their memory was held in honor, their tombs and whatever recalled their glorious death were objects of veneration." [65]

It was later that the notion of sainthood was expanded to something more like our

[65] Kirsch, *The Doctrine of the Communion of Saints,* pp. 119–20.

modern conception of it. After the Martyrs the great Ascetics became the object of invocation. Again hear Kirsch:

"Along with the Martyrs, other members of the kingdom of God received special honor as examples of life for the Faithful, and as protectors and intercessors with God. This development was closely connected with the great outburst of asceticism in the 4th century. It was those great teachers of asceticism, who by a life of the greatest self-renunciation had gloriously overcome all attacks of the evil one, who, along with some of the most celebrated Bishops, now began to be specially venerated with the Martyrs in a marked manner. The numerous miracles related in their biographies had much to do with exalting these Fathers of asceticism in the eyes of the people, and obtaining for them special honor." [66]

The feeling of the unique glory of martyrdom is found already in the New Testament. "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him." [67] "He that overcometh, to him will I grant to sit down in my throne." [68]

[66] Kirsch, p. 154.
[67] Rom. 11:28–9.
[68] Rev. 3:14.

This last passage is the source of the title sometimes given to Martyrs, *Sunthronoi,* those who share the throne of our Lord. But this feeling was extended, as we have just seen, to embrace others who were reckoned Saints as the era of martyrdom passed.

The following are the passages I have chosen out of a large number available.

Eusebius of Caesaraea (264–340)

We are instructed to say these things in prayers, instead of sacrifice and whole burnt offerings putting forward the blood of the holy Martyrs and sending up such supplications as these: "We, indeed, have not been held worthy to strive unto death, nor to empty out our blood for God: but since we are the sons of those who suffered these things, glory in our fathers' virtue, we beseech Thee to be compassionated for their sakes."

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315–386)

Then we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us, first Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, that at their prayers and intercession God would receive

our petitions. (Catech. Myst. V. 9 P. N. F. 2d Series, Vol. VII, p. 154.)

St. Gregory Nazianzus (325–390)

Yet mayest Thou gaze upon us from above, Thou divine and sacred person; either stay by Thy entreaties our thorn in the flesh, given to us by God for our discipline, or prevail upon us to bear it boldly, and guide all our life toward that which is most for our profit. And if we be translated, do Thou receive us there also in thine own Tabernacle, that, as we dwell together, and gaze together more clearly and more perfectly upon the Holy and Blessed Trinity, of which we have now in some degree received the image, our longing may at last be satisfied, by gaining this recompense for all the battles we have fought and the assaults we have endured. (Prayer to St. Basil, Orat. 43.82 P. N. F. 2d Series Vol. VII, p. 422.)

St. Gregory Nyssa (335–395)

May we, too, enter Paradise, having been strengthened through their (the Forty Martyrs) intercession unto some good confession of our Lord Jesus Christ. (In XL Mar.)

ON PRAYERS TO THE DEAD

St. Ambrose (340–397)

The Martyrs must be entreated, whose patronage we seem to claim for ourselves by the pledge as it were of their bodily remains. They can entreat for our sins, who, if they had any sins, washed them in their own blood; for they are the Martyrs of God, our leaders, the beholders of our life and of our actions. Let us not be ashamed to take them as our intercessors for our weakness, for they themselves knew the weaknesses of the body, even when they overcame. (De Viduis IX. P. N. F. 2d Series Vol. X, p. 406.)

For what comfort have I left, but that I hope to come quickly to Thee, my Brother, and that Thy departure will not cause a long severance between us, and that it may be granted me, through Thy intercessions, that Thou mayest quickly call me who long for Thee. (Prayer to his Brother. De Fide Resur. Carn. P. N. F. 2d Series Vol. X, p. 196.)

St. Jerome (340–420)

And now, Paula, farewell, and aid with your prayers the old age of your votary.

Your faith and your works unite you to Christ; thus standing in His presence you will the more readily gain what you ask. (Ep. 108 P. N. F. 2d Series Vol. VI, p. 212.)

Vigilantius said, "But once we die, the prayer of no person for another can be heard." St. Jerome replied, "If Apostles and Martyrs while still in the body can pray for others when they ought to be still anxious for themselves, how much more must they do so when they have won their crowns." (Contra Vigil. 6 P. N. F. 2d Series Vol. VI, p. 419.)

In bringing my book to an end I think I ought not to omit to mention the devotion of the holy woman Constantia, who, when a message was brought her that Hilarian's body was in Palestine, immediately died, proving even by death the sincerity of her love for the servant of God. For she was accustomed to spend whole nights in vigil at his tomb and to converse with him as if he were present in order to stimulate her prayers. (Vita Hilar. P. N. F. 2d Series Vol. VI, p. 315.)

St. Chrysostom (347–407)

They have much boldness of speech, not when living only, but also having died, yea, much more, having died. For they now bear the stigmata, the marks of Christ; and, displaying those stigmata, they are able to persuade the King all things. (Hom. De SS. Bernice et Prosdoce.)

May it be by the prayers of this holy Martyr (St. Pelagia), and by those of the rest who wrestled with her, that you may retain accurate remembrance, etc.

St. Augustine (354–430)

It is true that Christians pay religious honor to the memory of the Martyrs, both to excite us to imitate them, and to obtain a share in their merits, and the assistance of their prayers. (Contra Faustum, P. N. F. 1st Series, Vol. IV, p. 262.)

For on these very grounds we do not commemorate them at the Table in the same way as we do others who now rest in peace, as that we should also pray for them, but rather that they should do so for us, that we may cleave to their foot-steps. (On St. John,

P. N. F. 1st Series, Vol. VII, p. 350.)

The names attached to these quotations are, after the Apostles, second to none in dignity and authority in the history of the Church. They are those of the men who led in the battle waged for the preservation of the Catholic Faith from the attacks of heretics. It is to their writings that the Church in all subsequent times has appealed with confidence for the confirmation of its assertion that the faith it was teaching was the same faith that had been revealed in the beginning. These are they whom the whole Church, East and West, has revered as Saints and Doctors, and whose names are enrolled in all calendars for yearly commemoration. In particular, these are they to whom the Anglican Church at the Reformation made appeal. Can we for a moment consent to treat seriously the assertion that they had so far departed from the Faith committed to them as to bring back to the Church the heathenism it had abandoned, and had corrupted the pure religion of Christ by the introduction of shameless idolatry? Far be it from us to think so.

XVII

This state of things continued until the Reformation. All through the Middle Ages there was the constant exercise of the Communion of Saints through the tides of mutual intercession which flowed from all parts of the Church to its common center and back again. Prayers and Masses for the Dead were a notable expression of the confidence of the Faithful that those who had passed beyond their sight had not passed out of union with Christ and therefore had not passed beyond the reach of prayers. The Invocation of Saints expressed the unshaken confidence of the Faithful in the continued love and interest in the Body of Christ and each member of it felt by those who had passed to a clearer vision of God. There were no doubt gross abuses. That was inevitable under the circumstances of the low cultural level of the time. There were errors and exaggeration of teaching on the part of some of the clergy and wandering preachers; this also was inevitable as both clergy and preaching friars were drawn from

the mass of the people and could hardly have attained any very advanced instruction. But it cannot be said that the theology of the Church went much astray in these matters. The great mediæval theologians still remain our theological masters; but the mass of the clergy will never in any age be very far in advance of the mass of the people from which they are drawn. Their mentality will be that of the people, and they will share the prejudices and intellectual limitations and general social outlook of their congregations, rather than the point of view of their theological masters. The important thing was not that there were abuses of practice both in the matter of prayers for the Dead and the Invocation of Saints; but how, as the fact of their existence became clear through the rise in the intellectual level of the educated class, they were going to be dealt with. Reform was quite possible, but it would require a good deal of patience to carry out reforms in matter that touched the everyday devotional life of the people so closely.

And patience was one of the virtues that was lacking. The Renaissance was virtually a Pagan reaction against the authority

of the Church. It produced a very superficial culture based on a wholly mistaken notion of antiquity, and raised up a class of scholars who substituted an ideal of culture for the Church's ideal of holiness. Men were to be saved, if indeed it were at all necessary to be saved, by knowledge and not by faith. There were many profound and humble scholars born of the Ranaissance; but the immediate effect of the movement as a whole was the effect of all one-sided cultural development, to produce a set of men — and those especially who did the writing and popularizing — who were characterized by a contempt of the immediate past and by extreme arrogance in dealing with all such questions as the reform of Church discipline and practice. When the tide of the Renaissance had passed beyond the borders of Italy, where familiarity had already bred contempt with a good deal in the administration of the Church and where zeal for reform was never great, into Germany and France and England, a portion of its energy was speedily converted from a purely secular culture scorning things spiritual and devoted itself to the purification of

the Church. The Reformation was the child of the age-long restlessness of the great body of the Church under the abuses of the Papal over-lordship — a restlessness which had long been shaking the Church in the attempts of the Reforming Councils to bring about a better state of things — and the new cultural movement which was judging all things by the standards of classical Paganism as it understood, or rather misunderstood, it, and contemptuously rejecting much of mediæval religion as being barbarism and superstition.

The forces of the Renaissance touched England at the end of the Fourteenth and opening of the Fifteenth centuries but lightly, with much of its Paganism left behind. Educational reform came to the front and a small but remarkable group of men were interesting themselves in the improvement of educational discipline and practice. But this promising movement was soon swamped by the results of the quarrel between Henry VIII and the Papacy; and for a time the whole intellectual and spiritual energies of the nation were swept into the turmoil that arose. The outcome was the

constitutional reform of the Church of England and its freedom from the yoke that the Papacy had been trying with more or less success throughout the Middle Ages to impose upon it. It was some time before the Protestant influence from the Continent gained sufficient headway in England to bring about a formidable movement for organic and doctrinal change. But from the meeting of the Reform Parliament in 1529 there was a constant restlessness which was evidenced by the putting forth of a series of doctrinal formularies in the vain hope of quieting agitation and securing unity and peace. We are concerned with these formularies only in so far as they bear upon the subject of Prayer to the Dead.

XVIII

On the 11th of July, 1536, there was signed by the members of the Convocation of the clergy of England the first authorized formulary of faith of the reformed Church of England. It was entitled "Articles to Established Christian Quietness," and came

to be known as the Ten Articles. According to Canon Dixon [69] the Articles were intended to vindicate the Catholic position of the Church of England, and as a warning to those who wished to push the reformation beyond Catholic limits. The section entitled, "Of Praying to the Saints" is as follows;

"As touching praying to the Saints, we will that all Bishops and Preachers shall instruct and teach our people committed by us unto their spiritual charge, that albeit grace, remission of sin, and salvation, cannot be obtained but of God only by the mediation of our Saviour Christ which is the only sufficient Mediator for our sins; yet it is very laudable to pray to Saints in heaven everlastingly living, whose charity is ever permanent, to be intercessors, and to pray for us and with us unto the Father, that for His dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, we may have grace of Him and remission of our sins, with an earnest purpose (not wanting ghostly strength), to observe and keep His holy commandments, and never to decline from the same again unto our life's end: and in

[69] Dixon, Vol. 1, p. 409.

this manner we may pray to our Blessed Lady, to Saint John Baptist, and to all and every of the Apostles or any other Saint particularly, as our devotion doth serve us; so that it be done without any vain superstition, as to think that any Saint is more merciful, or will hear us sooner than Christ, or that any Saint doth serve for one thing more than another, or is patron of the same." [70]

This is a perfectly clear and definite setting forth of the traditional theology of the Church such as it will be found in the pages of any of the accredited theologians of the Middle Ages. But the Confession of Faith of which this was a part did not have the quieting effect desired and a new commission was appointed and sat in the following year, 1537, for the purpose of drawing up a new Confession of Faith. It consisted of the Bishops of both Provinces and certain other divines called together by the King's Writ. The result of their deliberations, which is entitled "The Institution of a Christian Man," and was popularly known as The Bishops' Book, was published with

[70] Formularies of Faith, etc., p. XXXIX.

the signatures of the two Archbishops, of all the diocesan Bishops, and of twenty-five Doctors, who declared that they wrote in the name of "All other Bishops, Prelates, and Archdeacons of the Realm." The book never had the authority of Convocation. In the instruction on the Third Commandment we read:

"We think it convenient, that all Bishops and Preachers shall instruct and teach the people committed unto their spiritual charge, that (forasmuch as the gifts of health of body, health of soul, forgiveness of sins, the gift of grace, for life everlasting, and such other, be the gifts of God, and cannot be given but by God) whosoever maketh invocation to Saints for these gifts, praying to them for any of the said gifts, of such like, (which cannot be given but by God only) yieldeth the glory of God to His creature, contrary to this Commandment. For God saith by His prophet, I will not yield my glory to any other. Therefore they that so pray to Saints for these gifts, as though they could give them, or be given of them, transgress this Commandment, yielding to the creature the honor of God. Neverthe-

less, to pray to the Saints to be intercessors with us and for us to our Lord for our suits which we make unto Him, and for such things as we can obtain of none but Him, so that we make no invocation of them, is lawful, and allowed by the Catholic Church." [71]

In this Article, while the legitimacy of asking for the prayers of the Saints is upheld, we seem to feel back of its wording a good deal of pressure being brought to bear upon its authors and an evident shading down in language to reach a compromise with objectors. The explanation in detail of what had been already sufficiently explained shows a certain uneasiness; and they make a curious distinction between invocation and intercession which seems to have become permanent in the English theology of the following century and to which we shall have to recur later. What needs to be noted now is that, under strong pressure, they still held fast to Catholic doctrine.

Six years later, however, the question was reopened by the report of a Commission which had been appointed three years earlier

[71] Formularies, etc., p. 141.

and consisted of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, six Bishops, and twelve Doctors. This document of 1543 which is the third Confession of Faith put forth in the reign of Henry VIII is entitled, The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition of a Christian Man, and was known as the King's Book. It was introduced into Convocation and after an examination lasting eight days was passed. It has therefore the authority of the English Church.[72] In the comment of the Third Commandment we read:

"Therefore they that so pray to the Saints for these gifts (of health, grace, etc.) as though they could give them, or be givers of them, transgress this Commandment; yielding to a creature the honor of God. Nevertheless, to pray unto the Saints to be intercessors with us and for us to our Lord in our suits which we make unto Him, and for such things as we can obtain of none but Him, so that we esteem not or worship not them as givers of those gifts, but as intercessors for the same, is lawful, and allowed by the Catholic Church: and if we honor them in other ways than as friends of

[72] Dixon, Vol. II, p. 314.

God, dwelling with Him, and established now in His glory everlasting, and as examples which were requisite for us to follow in holy life and conversation; or if we yield unto the Saints the adoration and honor which is due to God alone, we do (no doubt) break His Commandments." [73]

This reconsideration of the position of the Church of England continues firmly to hold to Catholic doctrine. There is no recession from the position of 1537. We note however that "Invocation" is dropped, and the word recommended in the preceding document, "Intercession," is adhered to.

In the following year, 1544, the English Litany as prepared by Archbishop Cranmer was put forth. It was modeled upon the mediæval Litanies, but the elaborate invocation of individual Saints familiar in them was dropped. It included however the following petitions:

St. Mary, Mother of God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, Pray for us.

All Holy Angels and Archangels, and all Holy Orders of Blessed Spirits, Pray for us.

[73] Formularies, etc., p. 305.

All Holy Patriarchs, and Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and Virgins, and all the Blessed Company of Heaven, Pray for us.[74]

Beginning with the reign of Edward VI there were three sets of Articles of Religion put forth. The XLII Articles were issued in 1553 but a few weeks before the death of the king, and in the opinion of Dr. Kidd [75] never had Synodical authority but simply the authorization of the Crown. That however is not important as with the accession of Mary they fell out of sight. After the accession of Elizabeth they were made the basis of a set of Articles put forth in 1563 with the authority of Convocation. As adopted by Convocation these were thirty-nine in number, but as published they were but thirty-eight — one having been suppressed by the Crown. They underwent a further revision in 1571 when the discarded Article was restored and became the Thirty-ninth of our present Articles.

The Twenty-second Article as it stands

[74] Proctor and Freere, *On the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 415.

[75] Kidd, *On the Thirty-nine Articles.* Vol. 1, p. 27 ff.

to-day declares the "Romish Doctrine" (Doctrina Romanensium, in the Latin version) "concerning . . . Invocation of Saints, a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture; but rather repugnant to the Word of God." It was in this form in the revision of 1563, but in that revision the phrase "Romish doctrine" was substituted for the phrase of the earlier version of 1553, "The doctrine of the School Authors." According to Kidd the effect of the change was "to direct the condemnation against a type of practice and teaching current within recent memory rather than against the system of the Schoolmen whose day was passed. The party with which this teaching was current was known as the 'Romanensian' or 'Romish' party, a name given to the extreme Mediævalists and not discriptive of the Roman Church as a whole." This is much as we use the word *ultramontane* to-day.

The Thirty-nine Articles were subscribed by the Upper House of Convocation on the 29th of January, 1563; and by the Lower House on the 23d of February, 1563. The decree of the Council of Trent on the subject

of the Invocation of Saints was not published till December, 1563. This would seem to be a sufficient answer to the allegation that the Convocation had the formal doctrine of the Roman Church in mind in changing the wording of the Article.[76]

Whatever the framers of Article XXII may have had in mind it is quite impossible to construe that Article as a condemnation of the practice of the Invocation of Saints. When one condemns a special theory concerning anything one can hardly be held to condemn the original that the theory interprets or any other interpretive theory; rather, the fact of the condemnation of one interpretation may usually be held to be the vindication of some other. If a congress of scientists were to meet and condemn "the Darwinian theory concerning evolution as a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded in no warranty of observed fact; but rather

[76] Bp. John Wordsworth has contended that the reference of the Article was to the Trentine decree of 17 Sept., 1562, "Of Masses in honor of the Saints." But as it seems to me impossible to construe this decree as having any bearing on the subject I do not think it worth while to go into the matter. See Stone, p. 41 ff.

repugnant to the whole body of scientific knowledge"; it is quite possible that a newspaper might come out with a scare headline —"Doctrine of Evolution Condemned by Scientists"; but the announcement would only produce a smile in educated circles where no one would dream that Evolution and the Darwinian theory concerning it were the same thing. If the framers of Article XXII had wished to condemn the practice of Invocation of Saints, the resources of the English language are quite sufficient to have enabled them to say so plainly: the fact that they said something quite different proves that they did not intend to condemn the practice in all its forms.

A clue to their intention is, perhaps, to be found in a distinction we have already met between Invocation and Intercession. I pointed out that in *The Institution of a Christian Man,* of 1537, this distinction was made, and was held to in the *King's Book,* of 1543. There are indications that this distinction had considerable vogue, as it has been pointed out that a like distinction between lawful prayers to the Saints and Invocation or praying to the Saints as though

they could themselves give what we desire, is found in the following century in the writings of Archbishop Ussher and of Bishop Forbes of Edinburgh. This establishes a probability that the word *invocation* in Article XXII may have the same signification.

So far as the formularies of the English Church are concerned, it would appear from this review that there is visible no intention of condemning the practice of the Invocation of Saints; but there is evidently an anxiety to have the doctrine so stated that there can be no mistake as to its scope — so to state it that it can under no circumstances be imagined to encroach upon the mediatorial office of Our Lord or upon the prerogatives of God. This is what we should expect from a Church trying to pick its way through difficult and embarrassing controversies and anxious to vindicate its Catholic character by an appeal to the teaching and practice of the Church in the era of the great Catholic Doctors.

XIX

Yet the fact is that the practice of the Invocation of Saints, and the broader practice of asking for the Prayers of the Dead whether Saints or not, passed out of the life of the English Church and consequently of the churches descended from it, and is to-day by the bulk of their membership either rejected outright or regarded with great distrust and suspicion. This seems a strange conclusion from the series of facts cited in this essay. How are we to explain it?

Perhaps a sufficient explanation of the decline and disappearance of this practice is to be found in the fact that all invocations were expunged from the public services of the Church. Under such circumstances those who had been accustomed to ask the Prayers of the Dead in their private devotion might go on doing so; but in the next generation or so the practice would die out. And this the more quickly if it were actively discouraged by those in authority. The Church through its official utterances no doubt expressed its mind, that in view of the

abuses that had been prevalent in the past and of the offense they gave, it would be better that public practice of Invocation should cease, though at the same time expressing no condemnation of the practice, it was not possible to impose a like note of silence upon the ministry of the Church, and especially upon the Bishops. Indeed, owing to the peculiar see-saw movement of the Reformation by which one party was now in control and now another, the practice of Invocation got a semi-official condemnation in the Book of Homilies. Bishops charged against it, and preachers preached against it. The influence of Continental Protestantism was all on the side of discouraging devotional expression, so that it is not surprising that the thought of souls as having any relation to this present life passed away. The attempt to struggle back to the devotional standards required by or implied in the Book of Common Prayer and the formal utterances of the Church, which characterized the opening of the 17th century ended in the suppression of the Church organization at the hands of the Protestant revolutionists; and, after an attempt at revival under the

later Stuarts, was crushed by the Protestant ascendency which gave us the spiritual deadness of the 18th century. The leaders of the Oxford Movement in the 19th century were somewhat wary of touching so highly controversial a doctrine. Late years have seen more boldness and a better appreciation of all that is involved in our daily professed belief in the Communion of Saints. Clergy and people alike have been slow in freeing themselves from the horrors of Protestant eschatology; but the task is now largely accomplished and the future looks bright.

XX

The teaching of the ancient Church which has been quoted was that of both East and West. As our concern in producing it was to illustrate the meaning of the appeal of the Church of England to antiquity we had no need to quote Mediæval or modern Western practice. Nor is there such need for quoting the belief and practice of the modern Orthodox Churches. But from another

point of view some description of the use and practice of the Orthodox seems desirable. Movements toward Church Unity so far as they contain any element of hope, are movements toward the ultimate reconciliation of the Churches of the Catholic tradition, and not toward a Pan-Protestant combination. Anglican and Orthodox have been so separated geographically and politically that any rapprochement in the past has been almost hopeless. But we are entering a new world religiously as well as otherwise, and in it our opportunities of contact with the Orthodox will be much fuller than in the past, and much less hampered by inherited prejudices. Moreover, attempts at an understanding and at inter-communion with the Orthodox will not be blocked by any such obstacles as lie across the way of approach to Rome. It would seem that the Oriental Churches and those of the Anglican Rite have but to understand each other to find a ground of agreement; and one of the things that it is necessary for us on our part to appreciate is the Orthodox understanding of the Communion of Saints. That shall be my excuse for a rather fuller citation of

Eastern documents than is at all necessary for the main purpose of my essay.

The difference between the Latin and the Orthodox eschatology is in reality the difference between the Latin and the Orthodox mind — the former clear cut, eager for sharp definition, not satisfied till every detail of doctrine and practice is fixed with precision; the latter, impressionistic, vague, mystic, satisfied with general statements and not eager about detail and consistent definition. There is a characteristic instance of this difference in the summing up of the state of the Departed in the Orthodox Confession:

The Orthodox Confession of Peter Mogila says that "Those souls of men who depart hence in the favor of God, and have wiped out their sins by repentance," are in a place variously named Paradise, Abraham's Bosom, and the kingdom of heaven. "By whichsoever of these three names that we have mentioned any one shall call the receptacle of the righteous souls, he will not err; provided that he believes and understands this much, that they enjoy the favor of God, and are in His heavenly kingdom, and, as the

hymns of the Church mention, in heaven." And again: "This, then, is to be believed by the Faithful, that as the souls of the righteous, although received into heaven, do not receive the full and perfect crown of glory before the last Judgment, so neither do the souls of the damned feel and suffer the full measure and weight of their punishments before that time. But after the final and decisive Judgment the souls of all, rejoined to their bodies, will be crowned with glory or overwhelmed with torments." [77]

The formal doctrine of the Orthodox with regard to the Invocation of Saints may be gathered from the following extracts:

"The Faithful who belong to the Church Militant on Earth, in offering their prayers to God, call at the same time to their aid the Saints who belong to the Church in heaven; and these, standing on the highest steps of approach to God, by their prayers and intercessions purify, strengthen, and offer before God the prayers of the Faithful living upon earth, and by the will of God work graciously and beneficently upon them, either by in-

[77] *The Orthodox Confession of Peter Mogila.* Pp. 56–7.

visible virtue, or by distinct apparitions, and in divers other ways." [78]

And a little further on:

"Q. In what state are the souls of the Dead till the general resurrection?

"A. The souls of the righteous are in light and rest, with a foretaste of eternal happiness; and the souls of the wicked are in a state the reverse of this." [79]

The Synod of Jerusalem says in its Eighth Decree: "We believe our Lord Jesus Christ to be the only Mediator, and that in giving Himself a ransom for all He hath through His own Blood made a reconciliation between God and man, and that Himself having a care for His own is advocate and propitiation for our sins. Albeit, in prayers and supplications to Him, we say the Saints are intercessors, and above all, the undefiled Mother of God the Word; the holy Angels too — whom we know to be set over us — the Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, Pure Ones, and all whom He hath glorified as having served Him faithfully. . . . And

[78] *The Longer Catechism of the Russian Church.* Blackmore, p. 78.

[79] Ibid. p. 98.

not only are the Saints while on their pilgrimage regarded as mediators and intercessors for us with God, but especially after their death, when all reflective vision being done away, they behold clearly the Holy Trinity." [80]

In the work *On the Duty of Parish Priests* it is said that " To desire and ask the aid and help, Prayers, that is, of the Saints, the Servants and Friends of God, who now reign with Christ their Lord, is a righteous and holy thing, that they too may join with us and for us in offering prayers to God for the forgiveness of sins. And when we repent and amend our lives, and receive pardon and mercy from the Lord, we may be sure that they too joy over us, as well as the Angels that are in heaven; as the Lord hath said." [81]

In the *Greek Manuals of Church Doctrine* (p. 56) it is said, " Prayer is directed properly to God, but even though we also pray to the Saints, we do this, not because we look upon them as a sort of God able of themselves to help us — far from us be such

[80] Robertson, p. 120.
[81] Blackmore, p. 261.

blasphemy! — but because we believe, as Friends of God by reason of their sanctity and moral purity, they intercede with Him on our behalf, even as we who are still in the land of the living pray for one another, and ask for one another's supplications."

Naturally the Liturgies are full of Invocation. Here is a characteristic passage from the Anaphora or Canon of the Mass of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom:

"Moreover we offer unto Thee this reasonable service on behalf of those departed in the Faith, our Ancestors, Fathers, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Preachers, Evangelists, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, and every just soul made perfect in the Faith, especially the most holy, stainless, highly blessed and glorious Lady, the Mother of God, and Ever-virgin Mary, for St. John the Prophet, Fore-runner and Baptist, the holy, glorious and illustrious Apostles, for Saint N—— whose memory we also celebrate, and for all Thy Saints, through whose prayers, O God, look favorably upon us."

We may supplement this account of the formal doctrines of the Orthodox with some extracts dealing with popular practice. Mr.

Athelston Riley says, "I may here say, in passing, that to the Easterns the idea that many Anglicans hold that the Blessed Virgin and the Saints cannot hear us when we ask them to intercede for us, appears . . . too un-Christian and materialistic to be even so much as discussed. Just as if the God in Whom 'We live and move and have our being' could not make the Saints hear us quite as easily as He is able to make our voices intelligible to one another in ordinary conversation. Moreover they believe that if it had not been His will that this communion of prayer between the living and departed should exist, then the Church which is His Body and in which His Spirit dwells would not have permitted and encouraged such prayers." [82]

In regard to the Russians' attitude toward the Departed, the Invocation of Saints "is practiced throughout the Orthodox communion, but with important qualifications. It is taught that the Saints themselves are only saved by grace, and therefore we cannot be helped by their merits but only by their

[82] Riley, *Birkbeck and the Russian Church*, p. 96, Note.

prayers. Further, the Saints and even Blessed Mary herself, are prayed for in the Liturgy. The Communion of Saints is a reality to the Russian. He is united with them in spirit, separated only in body. He asks them to pray for him as simply and naturally as we desire each other's prayers, for the Saints are his personal friends. Nor is this invocation confined solely to canonized saints. In just the same way a little child commends itself to the loving intercessions of its departed mother." [83]

This last point of the invocation of their own beloved dead is further illustrated as follows: "The separation between the visible and the invisible world seems to be non-existent. You may hear a son who has that day prayed for his mother's soul at her grave intreat her together with the holy Mother of God and the Saints, to pray for him before he goes to bed that night. I have seen in one of the cemeteries which surround Moscow a newly engaged couple having a service for the dead said at their parents' grave, and immediately afterwards have heard them asking them to pray to God

[83] Bishop, *Religion in Russia*, p. 35.

for a blessing on their marriage, and I subsequently found this custom as common as possible." [84]

Mr. Headlam tells us, "Often when a child who has lost his mother is praying, he may be heard adding her name to those of the other saints whom he asks to pray for him. Mutual prayer of the dead for the living, and of the living for the dead, as of both for the whole Church, is to the Russian the bond which links together the Church in one Communion of Saints." He goes on to quote from a poem by Khomiakoff, on his dead children:

"Dear children, at that same still midnight do ye,
As once I prayed for you, now in turn pray for me;
Me who loved well the cross on your foreheads to trace;
Now commend me in turn to the mercy and grace
Of our gracious and merciful God." [85]

[84] Birkbeck, *Lectures on the Russian Church*, p. 54.
[85] Headlam, *Teaching of the Russian Church*, p. 20.

Those who are eager for the unity of Christendom must feel that there is a group of facts with which they must be prepared to deal. Both the Greek and the Latin Churches are so firmly grounded in a belief in the intimacy of our relations with the Dead that it is inconceivable that they should ever give it up, so intimately is their whole spiritual life intertwined with it. They together represent by far the greater part of Christendom, and this the most spiritually intelligent part. We of the Anglican communion are equally with them committed in theory to the practice of the Invocation of the Dead. We claim to stand upon the platform of the Catholic Creeds — of the Christian religion as stated by the Church of the Conciliar period. Alas! we have fallen far behind our professed belief in the matter of practice. This failure on our part is not only a spiritual disaster but a bar to the unity of Christendom. There was published in 1904 a set of observations on the American Prayer Book which represent a report drawn up and presented to the Holy Synod. The question was whether Anglican congregations going over to the Orthodox Church

could be permitted to continue the use of the Book of Common Prayer. The committee was of the opinion that certain changes should be insisted on, among others that " Into all the services in general, prayers must be inserted addressed to the Blessed Mother of God, to Angels and Saints, with the glorification and invocation of them." [86]

XXI

Any one who has entered into the enjoyment of his privilege as a member of Christ to communion with all the other members of the Body has found a vast expansion of his spiritual outlook, and a glorious enrichment of his life in Christ. When we have shaken off the spiritual selfishness which thinks only of the relation of God to our own souls, and our expanding thought and prayers have embraced all the company of heaven, from Blessed Mary, Ever-virgin Mother of God, to the last baptized baby whom our Lord has gathered to Himself, then we realize the

[86] *Alcuin Club Tracts,* No. 12, p. 35.

meaning of the Orthodox theologians who define the Church as "Faith and love as an organism." The Communion of Saints is the mutual exercise of love. We are privileged to feel that death has not cast any shadow athwart that love, but has deepened and gladdened it. The belief that those whom we have loved are still alive somewhere in God's universe, but are cut off from us save in memory, may give rise to noble thoughts of them; but they are always thoughts tinged with sadness — such sadness as we feel even in Matthew Arnold's beautiful lines in *"Rugby Chapel."*

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm.

The Catholic faith has got rid of that note of limitation — got rid of it because we have not been separated from our Dead. Their names are on our lips with the same frequency, with the same passion of love, as in

their lifetime. Our souls reach out to communion with them, and find it at the altar, and in our private prayers. We ask the aid of their intercession, of the intercessions not only of Blessed Mary and all Saints, but of the parent or child from whom we have just been visibly separated by death. We ask their prayers, not because we doubt of them, but because the asking is the expression of our love. Love needs to manifest itself — to ask and be asked. We know what the answer to the question is —

> My name on earth was ever in thy prayer,
> And wilt thou never utter it in heaven?

Where life in Christ is love, love also is unending action. These are not only our convictions — they are our experiences, experiences that we would lead all to share.

> O doubting heart! Dost thou not know thy love,
> Across the awful silentness of death
> Smiles at thee through the dark?

THE END

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On prayers to the dead

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